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*Manuals of Religious Instruction
for Pupil Teachers.*

EDITED BY

JOHN PILKINGTON NORRIS, M.A.

CANON OF BRISTOL

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LESSON I.

ST. LUKE'S PORTRAITURE OF CHRIST—CHARACTERISTICS
OF ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL—ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST
—RECAPITULATION.

WE have already contemplated the Redeemer as presented to us by two of the Evangelists.

First, in St. Matthew's Gospel, we beheld Him as the Messiah of Israel—fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies—the Son of David—the Seed of Abraham—preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and passing through His predicted sufferings to His crown and glory.

In St. Mark's portraiture of Him we gazed upon the Worker of miracles, declared to be the Son of God with power; Whose Divine energy displayed itself in unceasing, untiring works of love; "Who went about" (to adopt St. Peter's words) "doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him."

In the third Gospel He comes before us as *the Son of Man*—the Second, the Perfect, the Ideal Man¹—the Physician, the Friend, the Redeemer and High-Priest of *the whole human race*—as seeking not only His own people, but all mankind—as not only the Son of David

¹ "The *Second Man* is the Lord from Heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47).

and the Son of Abraham, but the Son of Adam and the Son of God.

*This universality—this redemption for all men—this far-reaching compassion—may be traced all through St. Luke's Gospel as its dominant characteristic—its most distinguishing feature. Thus we find that the third Evangelist alone records the mission of the Seventy, and the number 'seventy' typified to the Jew the outer Gentile world; just as the number 'twelve' was the symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel. In his pages only we find the parable of the good Samaritan, who shewed mercy to the stranger in misfortune, while the Jewish priest and Levite passed by on the other side; and the story of the ten lepers, amongst whom the only grateful one was of the same hated race; or the words of the angels at the Nativity, "Peace on earth, good will toward men;" and of the aged Simeon when he saw "the salvation which God had prepared before the face of all peoples," and which he declared to be "*a light to lighten the Gentiles*," as well as "the glory of His people Israel" (ii. 14, 32).*

St. Luke delights to exhibit the Divine Saviour sympathizing with the sorrows of men, comforting them with His gracious words, shewing mercy even to the chief of sinners, anxious for the good of His most cruel enemies. In the picture he has drawn for us of our Lord we see, perhaps more clearly than in any other, the utter contrast between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the Pharisees. We behold Him putting down the mighty from their seat and exalting them of low degree; filling the hungry with good things, while the rich He sends empty away; caring for the poor, the lowly, the despised and forsaken by the world; the

Son of Man Who came to seek and to save that which was *lost*. He pardons the woman which was a sinner; He meets the widow of Nain, broken-hearted for the loss of her only son, and addresses to her those tender words, "Weep not;" He tells the daughters of Jerusalem to weep not for Him but for their own coming troubles. He prays even for those who have nailed Him to the Cross, and, forgetful of His own agonies, He utters those words of Divine compassion, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is to St. Luke's Gospel again that we turn for the parables of the rich man and Lazarus, the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, the prodigal son.

Amongst its lesser characteristics it bears the stamp of the superior education of the author, and shews him to have been interested, it is thought, in observing the workings of the human mind; as when he tells us that the disciples "believed not for joy" in the resurrection of their Lord; or that when Jesus told them of His coming sufferings and death "they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken;" they would not in fact lay to heart what was so great a mystery to them. Again, we learn from St. Luke how, after St. Peter's denial of his Divine Master, the Lord turned and looked upon him. May we not also recognise the Physician (Col. iv. 14) in his account of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, and in that of our Lord's agony in the Garden, when His sweat "was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," and again in the record of the healing of Malchus' ear?

We owe to St. Luke the knowledge of many occurrences or facts of Gospel history which are not to be

learned from the writings of the other Evangelists. Amongst the more important of these are the story of the birth of John the Baptist; the Annunciation; the visit of the Virgin Mary to Elisabeth; a fuller account of the birth of our Lord; the events of His early infancy—including the circumcision, the presentation in the Temple, and the blessing and prophetic words of Simeon; and, notably, that interesting glimpse of our Lord's youthful days, His visit to Jerusalem and the Temple at the age of twelve years. Other minor incidents peculiar to St. Luke have been already noticed.

St. Luke wrote his Gospel in Greek, probably at Cæsarea, A.D. 56-60, during St. Paul's imprisonment by Felix. He makes no reference to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, nor is there anything in his narrative to lead us to suppose that he had seen them; although, in his preface (i. 1-4), he does refer to other and probably fragmentary narratives,¹ by those who "from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word." Doubtless from these he made a judicious selection, probably with the help of the Apostle Paul, but certainly under the higher influence of the Holy Spirit directing, assisting, but not superseding, the exercise of his natural faculties.

St. Luke's Gospel may well have been written with the view of promoting, what St. Paul so earnestly desired, the reconciliation of the Jewish and the Gentile Christians. It is fuller and richer in parables than the other Gospels, especially those which point to the admission of the Gentiles.

The opinion of all scholars of eminence confirms the traditional belief of the Church, that St. Luke, the

¹ Adopting in some cases, it has been supposed, their very words.

friend and companion of the Apostle Paul and the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, was the author of the Gospel that bears his name. The few facts of his history that have been ascertained with any degree of certainty are derived from the New Testament Scriptures. The first notice of him is in his own work, written after his Gospel, namely the Acts of the Apostles (xvi. 10, 11), where he says, "Loosing from Troas, *we* came with a straight course to Samothracia:" thus informing us that it was at Troas he first joined Paul and Silas, Paul being there on his second missionary tour; and from this time, throughout the narrative, his presence with the Apostle, or his absence from him, is known by his use or disuse of the first person plural. We meet with it in the above reference (xvi. 10); it disappears after xvi. 17, but recurs in xx. and xxi. and throughout chapters xxvii. and xxviii. St. Luke went with Paul and Silas to Philippi, remaining there, it would seem, when they left that place; but he again joined St. Paul on his return thither¹ on his third missionary journey, some five years afterwards (Acts xx. 5, 6), and accompanied him to Jerusalem; and it seems probable that during the Apostle's detention at Cæsarea St. Luke visited him in his confinement, and at this time it is supposed he wrote his Gospel. He sailed with the Apostle to Rome, and was with him there during both his first and second imprisonment. It was during St. Paul's first imprisonment in Rome that he wrote the message, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you" (Col. iv. 14), and from

¹ It does not follow, however, that St. Luke remained all that time at Philippi; though he possibly made it his headquarters, and some suppose him to have written his Gospel at Philippi.

chapter iv. 10, 11, we infer that St. Luke was a Gentile. "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, . . . and Jesus, which is called Justus, *who are of the circumcision;*" and then, going on to enumerate others who (we infer) were *not* of the circumcision, he places St. Luke's name amongst them. St. Paul's pathetic words in his second Epistle to Timothy, "Only Luke is with me," prove that St. Luke did not forsake him in his second and severer imprisonment, although it is likely that in still visiting him and ministering to him he ran no small risk of sharing the Apostle's fate.

It is probably due to the influence of the great Apostle of the Gentiles that St. Luke became especially the Evangelist of the Gentiles, and that, like St. Paul, he rejoiced in the freedom and universality of the Gospel. Eusebius informs us that St. Luke was a native of Antioch in Syria, and that he preached in Dalmatia, Gaul, Italy and Macedonia. Whether he suffered martyrdom or died a natural death is a matter of doubt. According to some authorities he suffered martyrdom in Greece; others say that he died in Bithynia.

To recapitulate, to go over again briefly and to collect into a few sentences the chief points to be remembered in this introductory Lesson, it may be stated that the dominant characteristics of St. Luke's Gospel are—

1. *Its universality*—it shews that the blessings of redemption are for all men.

2. *Hence it abounds in incidents and parables that teach love, mercy and redemption for all mankind,*

without distinction of nation or race. It exhibits the Divine Saviour as the Son of Man seeking that which was lost, sympathizing with the sons of men, comforting them and shewing mercy to the chief of sinners.

3. It traces our Lord's descent up to Adam.

4. *It is richer in parables than either of the other Gospels.*

5. *St. Luke wrote his Gospel, it is supposed, under the superintendence of the Apostle Paul.*

(a) *Probably at Cæsarea, during St. Paul's confinement there (A.D. 58-60), though some suppose it was written a year or two earlier at Philippi.*

(b) *There is nothing to shew that he used the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, or that he had ever seen them; but he may have made a selection from incomplete narratives of the sayings and doings of Christ.*

(c) *He had, however, not only these helps, but the higher aid of the Holy Spirit directing, assisting but not superseding the use of his natural faculties.*

(d) *The Gospel of St. Luke is, in some respects, fuller than the other Gospels, especially in relating the birth and infancy of our Lord, and in his record of the parables.*

(e) *The opinion of modern scholars confirms the tradition of the Church that St. Luke, the friend and companion of the Apostle Paul and the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, was the author of the Gospel that bears his name.*

(f) *St. Luke is spoken of by St. Paul as a physician; and he is said to have been a native of Antioch in Syria.*

MIRACLES, PARABLES AND INCIDENTS PECULIAR
TO ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

Miracles. Restoring to life the son of the widow of Nain (vii. 11-17)—healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity (xiii. 11-17)—of the man with the dropsy (xiv. 1-6)—of the ten lepers (xvii. 11-19)—of Malchus' ear (xxii. 51).

Parables. The two debtors (vii. 41, 42)—the good Samaritan (x. 30-37)—the friend at midnight (xi. 5-8)—the rich fool (xii. 16-21)—the barren fig-tree in the vineyard (xiii. 6-9)—the great supper (xiv. 16-24)—the lost sheep and the lost piece of money (xv. 3-10)—the prodigal son (xv. 11-32)—the unjust steward (xvi. 1-13)—the rich man and Lazarus (19-31)—the unprofitable servant (xvii. 7-10)—the unjust judge (xviii. 1-8)—the Pharisee and the publican (xviii. 9-14)—parable of the pounds (xix. 12-27).

OTHER INCIDENTS AND FACTS.

History of John the Baptist's birth—detailed account of Christ's Birth—Christ's visit to Jerusalem at the age of twelve years—first miraculous draught of fishes—James and John would call down fire from heaven—mission of the Seventy—story of Zacchæus—the first of the three visits to Martha and Mary—the disciples praising God at the triumphal entry—Christ weeping over Jerusalem—the Bloody Sweat in the Agony—Christ mocked by Herod Antipas and his soldiers—the penitent thief—particulars of our Lord's Ascension.

LESSON II.

THE POLITICAL, MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF
THE JEWISH PEOPLE AT THE TIME OF OUR LORD'S
BIRTH—THE FAITHFUL FEW—ZACHARIAS AND THE
ANGEL—THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS. (i. 1-23.)

AT the time of our Lord's birth the political condition of the Jewish people was remarkable. The period of their complete independence under their native princes, the Maccabees, had, it is true, passed away; the sceptre—the emblem of sovereignty—was fast slipping out of their hands; but the tribe of Judah still retained its political pre-eminence, though under the protectorate of Rome, and so the words of the prophet were fulfilled, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh¹ come" (Gen. xlix. 10).

At the death of Herod, shortly after the birth of Christ, his dominions were divided amongst his sons with the sanction of Augustus, Emperor of Rome (see Manual I., Note 5, p. 13), and Archelaus succeeded to the government of Judæa; but after a reign of about ten years the Roman Emperor deposed and banished him. Judæa was united to the Roman Province of Syria, and ruled by a Roman Procurator under the Governor of Syria. So, when our Lord began His

¹ The Peaceful One, *i.e.* the Messiah or Christ.

ministry, the sceptre had departed from Judah, and throughout the Gospel narrative we meet with "the usual features of a Roman province—the Prætorium; the Publicans; the tribute-money; Roman soldiers and centurions; Cæsar the only king."¹

The moral and religious state of the Jews was even more deplorable than the political. Both priests and people were irreligious and corrupt. They knew that according to the prophecies the time for the Messiah to appear had come (see Note 1); but they looked only for a great temporal deliverer and king; yet, deep as was the corruption of the nation, a faithful few were still serving God, walking in His ways, and waiting for the consolation of Israel. They mourned over the sinfulness, misery and sadness they saw around, and longed for a Saviour who should deliver them from sin—a Saviour not of their own choosing but God's; and so, while the Scribes and Pharisees and the mass of the nation cared only for a Messiah who should come in might and majesty, they were ready to believe in the Sufferer and Sin-bearer spoken of by the prophet Isaiah—in Him Who came in meekness and humility, blessing the poor in spirit, and scattering the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Just as the reign of Herod (called the Great) was drawing to a close, there lived in the hill country of Judæa, probably at Hebron (see Note 2), an aged priest, of the course of Abia (see Note 3), named Zacharias. His wife Elisabeth was of the house of Aaron, and they belonged to that faithful remnant of God's people of whom we have spoken; for, St. Luke tells

¹ Conybeare and Howson.

us, "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." But, though happy in the love and service of God, there was one sorrow that lay heavy upon them—they were childless—they had no son; and their prayers for what Jewish parents always considered one of the greatest of earthly blessings, and a mark of Divine favour, had not been answered. They were now to learn that God often grants what He delays, and that when His time comes He gives us more than we have asked.

The priestly families from the time of David had been divided into twenty-four courses, and each course supplied in turn for one week the Temple service. Once more the turn for Zacharias's course to minister came round, and he left his home for the Holy City. Many times had he "executed the priest's office before God," but this visit to Jerusalem he would never forget—so new and strange a thing happened to him. He was in his appointed place at the Temple, probably at the time of the morning sacrifice. The sacrificing priest had slain the lamb, and sprinkled its blood upon the altar, and the priests had again assembled to draw lots—this time to decide who should offer the incense on the golden altar in the Holy Place. The prayers were said, the lots were cast, and it fell to Zacharias to perform this the most honourable of the priestly duties. Then he went up to the altar of burnt-offering with his assistants. While one filled a golden censer with frankincense, another took live coals from the altar in a golden vessel; and, slowly mounting the steps that led to the Holy Place, they entered the sacred chamber, and were no longer visible to the assembled wor-

shippers. Here the glare of day never entered; but the golden lamp that rested upon the seven-branched candlestick was kept burning night and day. The golden altar of incense stood opposite the rich curtain or veil that hung before the entrance to the Holy of Holies, and on either side of it were the table of shewbread and the golden candlestick. The assistant priests performed their duties, and then withdrew, leaving the incensing priest alone in the Holy Place, awaiting the signal from the presiding priest to begin burning the incense on the golden altar. When this was given, the cloud of fragrant smoke rose up before God, together with the prayers of the people, who had fallen down with one accord before the Lord, praying with outstretched hands, while throughout the Temple, and amongst the multitude of worshippers in its courts, the deepest silence rested.

It was, we may suppose, at this solemn moment of silent prayer, when both priests and people had cast themselves down in supplication before God, that Zacharias saw an angel of the Lord standing on the right hand of the altar of incense; "and when Zacharias saw him he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. . . . And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed, be-

cause thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season" (i. 1-20).

The unbelief of Zacharias brought its own punishment. He had asked for a sign, and a sign was given; but it came as a judgment, depriving him of both speech and hearing (i. 20) until the very thing he had doubted, even upon the word of an angel, came to pass.

Meanwhile the people wondered why Zacharias tarried so long in the Holy Place, but when he came out, and instead of pronouncing the priestly blessing, "he beckoned unto them and remained speechless," they perceived he had seen a vision.

When Zacharias had completed his week of service—but not till then—he hastened away to his home in the hills, pondering deeply upon the strange things that had happened to him.

In this Lesson the ministry of angels has been brought strikingly before us, and it will be well to give this miraculous agency a brief consideration.

During the four thousand years of man's life upon earth that preceded our Lord's first advent, we hear from time to time of the ministry of angels, and we see them at certain marked periods of Israel's history—in the patriarchal and prophetic ages, the days of Abraham, the times of the Judges, at the close of the Captivity—employed as God's messengers or agents in the affairs of men on various commissions of mercy and of judgment, punishing (Gen. xix., 2 Kings xix. 35), guarding (2 Kings vi. 17), instructing (Dan. ix. 22), or strengthening (Dan. x. 18);—but it is remarkable that during the half century beginning just before the birth of Christ the instances of the ministry of angels are more

numerous than in all the previous centuries of the world's history.

MORE than five hundred years before the time of which we write, the Angel Gabriel had been sent to the Prophet Daniel to make him "understand" many things about the future history of this people, and especially about "the Messiah the Prince," and the time of His advent (Dan. ix. 24, 25); and accordingly, when the time came for the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecies, we find the same angel appearing to an aged priest to announce the birth of the Forerunner; while to the Virgin Mary he brought the greater news, and made known the profounder mystery, that she was the mother of the Son of God; and we shall see how active was the ministry of angels during our Lord's sojourn in the world,—how they heralded His birth (see Luke ii. 8-14), and came to Him in His seasons of sorest conflict, how they watched at His tomb and made known His resurrection to His sorrowing disciples. And after His ascension we behold angels bringing help and succour to the infant Church—releasing the Apostles St. John and St. Peter from prison, comforting St. Paul, instructing Cornelius, and smiting Herod.

Their visible agency has now been withdrawn, but we have warrant in Holy Writ for believing that these ministering spirits, though unseen by the eye of sense, are still sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation; and as, when the foundations of the earth were laid "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii. 7), and on the night of our Saviour's nativity a multitude of the heavenly host again glorified God (for in the birth of the Second

Adam the fallen world was created anew) and proclaimed peace to men ; so at His second glorious appearing legions of angels will attend Him (Matt. xxv. 31), gathering His elect (Matt. xxiv. 31), and casting out from His Kingdom all things that offend.

NOTES—LESSON II.

1. "*The time for the Messiah to appear had come.*" The seven weeks and threescore and two weeks (each day being reckoned as a year) that the Angel Gabriel told Daniel should elapse "from the going forth of the command to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince" (Dan. ix. 25) had been fulfilled. These and other signs led to a general expectation of the Messiah's advent at the very time He really appeared.

2. "*In the hill country of Judæa, probably Hebron.*" Hebron was an ancient city of Palestine, twenty-two miles south of Jerusalem, and the burial-place of several of the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That Zacharias lived at Hebron is probable (as it was a noted city of the priests), but by no means certain. Some suppose that Jutta in the hill country south of Hebron is the place referred to in the text.

3. "*Abia*;" the Greek form of Abijah. The priestly families, descendants of Aaron, were twenty-four in number in King David's time ; and by his command (1 Chron. xxiv.) each family, in turn, ministered in the Temple for one week. Four only of these families returned from Babylon (Ezra ii. 36-39) ; but they were divided, as before, into twenty-four courses with the original names.

LESSON III.

THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD—BIRTH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD—THE CIRCUMCISION AND PRESENTATION—SIMEON AND ANNA—THE RETURN TO NAZARETH—JESUS AND THE RABBIS. (i. 26-80—ii. 1-52.)

THE first and second chapters of St. Luke's Gospel are especially important and interesting, containing as they do the announcement of the birth of St. John the Baptist, the Annunciation, the visit of the Virgin Mary to Elisabeth the wife of Zacharias ; the Birth of our Lord ; the vision of the shepherds ; the details of our Lord's Birth and Infancy (attesting, so surely, that the Eternal Son of God was incarnate in the Babe of Bethlehem and the Child of Nazareth) ; the inspired songs of the Virgin Mary, of Zacharias and of Simeon ; and the one glimpse we possess of our Lord's early youth, in which we behold the boy of twelve years⁸ astonishing the Doctors of the Law with His understanding and answers, yet subject to His parents, and in favour with God and man.

In our last Lesson we beheld the Angel Gabriel announcing to the aged Zacharias the birth of the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets—the Fore-runner and Friend of the Messiah.

Now we see the same swift and majestic messenger of the Almighty hastening—not to the sacred Temple, nor yet to some sumptuous palace of the Holy City ; but to a despised village in the hills of Galilee ; entering the home of a lowly virgin of Nazareth, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, and greeting her with words of reverence :—

“ Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. . . . For thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest ; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David : and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end. . . . And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word.”

Here was Mary's faith. She put herself into God's hands—she yielded herself up to His disposal—she had no will but His.

But as the days went on her heart seemed too full any longer to contain her great secret. She must confide it to some one ; she must have human companionship, and to whom should she go but to her kinswoman Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias, between whom and herself the Angel's message had established a new and mysterious bond of sympathy ? So Mary arose, and went in haste to the home of Elisabeth amongst the hills of Judæa, to which a journey of some four or five days would bring her.

St. Luke tells us that she “entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. . . . And Elisa-

beth was filled with the Holy Ghost," and said to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. And whence is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Then the Virgin Mary also was filled with the Holy Ghost, and praised God in that noble song of praise that we call the *Magnificat*, or Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary :—

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

But Mary's hymn does not concern herself only. As a type of the Church, she thanks God for the mystery of the Incarnation, and prophesies of the Kingdom about to be set up in the world. She speaks of what God will do by His Son as if already done, using the past tense throughout, as though the whole scheme of redemption were involved in the miracle of the Conception.

For three months the mother of our Lord and the mother of the Baptist dwelt together in Elisabeth's house, and then Mary returned to her own home at Nazareth.

Not long after the departure of Mary the words of the angel to Zacharias were fulfilled in their season. Elisabeth's child, whose birth he had prophesied, was born ; and when her neighbours and kinsfolk "heard how the Lord had shewed mercy upon her, they rejoiced with her."

On the eighth day, according to Jewish custom, the child was circumcised ; and greatly to the surprise of her kinsfolk (who never doubted but this first-born son would be called Zacharias after his father) Elisabeth said, "He shall be called John." "There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name," they expostulated ; but when Zacharias was appealed to by signs

(for he was still deaf and dumb), he wrote, saying, "His name is John." That moment "his tongue was loosed," and being filled with the Holy Ghost, he praised God in a glad inspired song, and prophesied that his infant son should be a prophet, and "go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways" (i. 59-79).

The greatest event in the history of the world, the advent of the long-promised Saviour, was now close at hand. The promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head had tarried long—fully four thousand years—and (though to the chosen people a Messiah had been indeed dimly shadowed forth in prophecy and in type) mankind, for the most part, had lived and died without any certain knowledge of God or of His promise of a Redeemer. Why was this? Why were the nations left in ignorance so long? We can only answer in St. Paul's words :—"O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" The question should be put aside as one quite beyond us. All that we can say is that the delay served to make more and more evident man's need of redemption, and his inability to redeem himself. Empires had risen to power, nations had become civilized, the human intellect had been cultivated; the arts of poetry, painting, sculpture and architecture attained to a perfection that still excites our wonder and admiration; but if we ask, what was the moral and religious condition of these nations? we find that they were sunk in the grossest idolatry and social degradation. In the words of St. Paul, "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the

glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; . . . who changed the truth into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever" (Rom. i. 21-25). How needful then was a Redeemer Who should be "a light to lighten the Gentiles" as well as "the glory of God's people Israel."

Peace at this time was universal throughout the Roman Empire. The civil wars of the preceding century had terminated in the triumph of Octavianus, who became Emperor of Rome, and master of the civilized world, with the title of Cæsar Augustus (see Note 1); and now, wishing to ascertain the population and wealth of the various countries over which he reigned, he issued a decree "that all the world" (or all the countries subject to his rule) "should be taxed" or enrolled; and every one went for that purpose to his own city. Thus it came to pass that Joseph of Nazareth was obliged to journey to Bethlehem, the city of David (for he was of the house and lineage of David), and he took with him Mary, who by descent was also of the Royal family.

It is the custom in Eastern towns to provide a place of accommodation for travellers—a *khan* or *caravan-serai*—where they may find shelter. This was no doubt the "inn" that Joseph and Mary found already full when they arrived at Bethlehem; and the local tradition in Jerome's time was that they took refuge in one of the limestone caves—half-dwelling half-stable—that are so numerous in Palestine: and here Mary "brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger" (ii. 1-7; see Note 2).

That same night shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks on the downs near Bethlehem. They belonged, we may believe, to the faithful few who, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, and others of whom we shall hear, were waiting for the consolation of Israel; for suddenly "the glory of the Lord shone round about them," and the angel of the Lord appeared to them, and said to them, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Even while the shepherds were still listening in wonder, "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

When this glorious vision of the great army of angels had passed away, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, "and found Mary and Joseph," and (according to the words of the angel) "the Babe lying in a manger" (ii. 8-16).

Let us consider for a few moments this great fact of the Incarnation, or *the coming of the Son of God in the flesh* :—

1. *The Second Person of the Holy Trinity took our whole human nature*, and so God and Man became "One Christ;" "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God:" and so He was "perfect God and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting."

2. *In becoming man God the Son emptied Himself of His glory—laid it aside* :—"Being in the form of God,

(He) thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made Himself of no reputation (literally, *emptied Himself*), and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 6-8).

3. *As man He was really born into the world, and became subject to all the sinless infirmities of our nature*—hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, death (Matt. iv. 2 ; John iv. 7, iv. 6 ; Mark xv. 15, 45).

4. *As man He was possessed of a human soul*, and so, like other men, He had a human will, and felt the emotions of joy, sorrow, pity, anger (Luke x. 21, xix. 41 ; John xi. 35 ; Mark iii. 5).

5. *As God He forgave sins, raised the dead to life, and having accomplished the great work of redemption on the cross, reunited His human soul and human body*; glorifying both with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

Such is the doctrine of the Incarnation expressed in the doctrinal language of our Church ; and so might St. Luke also have expressed it by way of preface to his Gospel. But not so was the mind of the Spirit. God's Holy Spirit can speak, and loves best to speak, in far simpler language than uninspired man. The very deepest mysteries He can reveal in words that will reach the heart of a child ; and so here, in a narrative of childlike simplicity, the profound doctrine of the Incarnation becomes in our earliest years—almost unconsciously—bound up and interwoven with all our thoughts of Christ.

But for these two chapters, we might have supposed that the Second Person of the Trinity entered into the

Son of Mary and dwelt within Him, as we believe the Third Person may enter into one of us, and dwell within us. All the subsequent narrative might perhaps have been explained by this theory,—the Son of God within the Man Jesus enabling Him to work all those miracles. But all our faith, all our hopes, would be shattered ; for the Son of God would not have died for us any more than the Holy Ghost dies in one of His martyrs at the stake. The *man* Jesus, deserted by the Son of God, would now only be numbered with the most favoured of the Saints, instead of pleading for us on the very throne of God.

St. Luke's Gospel of the Childhood forbids all error on this point. From the very Conception, the Child was "the Son of the Highest," One "Whose goings forth were from everlasting" (Micah v. 2). It was no natural birth. The Mother was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, therefore "that holy Thing" that was born of her was from the first "the Son of God."

Therefore was Elisabeth inspired to salute her as "the Mother of my Lord."

Therefore the angels declared the new-born Babe to be the "Saviour," "Christ the Lord."

That this child of man—born of a woman—was from the moment of birth—yea, as our Creed is careful to add, from the moment of conception—the Son of God, is what we mean by the doctrine of the Incarnation.

This is the doctrine to which the Spirit, the water, and the blood—all combined in the Person of Christ—bear witness (1 John v. 6).

It is the corner-stone of our faith.

"He that confesseth not that Jesus Christ *is come in the flesh* is not of God."

On the eighth day Jesus was circumcised, for "it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17)—to be made under the law (Gal. iv. 4); and His name was called JESUS, as God had commanded by the angel.

About six weeks after the birth of the holy Child, His parents carried Him to Jerusalem from Bethlehem, a distance of between five and six miles.

There were two reasons for this:—

(1) Mary must present the offering required of every mother by the law of Moses when the days of her purification were accomplished.

(2) Jesus, as a first-born Son, had to be dedicated to the Lord in His Temple; for when God slew the first-born in Egypt He commanded that all the first-born sons should be given to Him (Exod. xiii. 2).

Mary's offerings had been made, and the holy Child presented to the Lord, when Simeon, a just and devout man, who had waited for the consolation of Israel, gently taking the Divine Infant from the arms of His Mother, blessing God, exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation;"¹ and then, speaking by the Spirit, he prophesied that the holy Child should be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel;" but also "a sign which should be spoken against"—causing to many, even to His mother, much searching of the heart (ii. 22-35). God's promise to His servant, that he should not die "before he had seen the Lord's Christ," was

¹ Simeon uses the indicative mood, "lettest," and not the imperative "let," as is sometimes supposed. He does not ask God to release him, but only declares that God is releasing him peacefully.

fulfilled, and he was willing now to depart and be at rest.

The aged prophetess Anna also gave thanks unto God, and spoke of the infant Messiah to all who, like herself, had been looking for redemption in Jerusalem.

Mary and Joseph tarried no longer in Bethlehem ; but found a safer dwelling-place at their old home Nazareth. For thirty years Jesus led a most secluded life amongst the hills of Galilee, of which we know nothing. One, and only one, most interesting glimpse of our Lord's boyhood is given by the Evangelist St. Luke, and to that we turn.

Every year Mary and Joseph went up to the Feast of the Passover, and when Jesus had completed His twelfth year they took Him with them (ii. 30. See Note 3).

We have seen (in Manual II., Lesson VIII.) that the Feast of the Passover, and the other holy festivals held at Jerusalem, were very interesting features in the national and religious life of the Israelitish people ; and the more we know and understand of this life the more real will the Gospel history and the ministry of our Lord appear to us.

If on the eve of one of these festivals we could suppose ourselves on some elevated spot from which we could get a view of the whole country, we should see the people everywhere actuated by one common motive—moved by one common impulse. Bands of pilgrims, mostly on foot, are pouring out of every town and village—leaving the safety of their homes and property to the care of their Heavenly Father (Exod. xxxiv. 24)—and threading their way, over plain and valley and hill, from all parts of the country, ever

pressing onwards towards the Holy City. Their songs are the songs of Zion :—"How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem! . . . whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to give thanks to the Name of the Lord."

It was one of these pilgrim journeys in which "kinsfolk and acquaintance" mingled pleasantly, that Jesus joined with His parents at the age of twelve years. It was His first Passover, and eagerly,—joyfully no doubt,—He trod the streets of Jerusalem, and the Courts of His Father's House.

The festival over, the large company of Galilæan pilgrims began their homeward journey; Mary and Joseph supposing that Jesus was with them, but when they halted for the night, and sought Him amongst their friends and neighbours but found Him not, they hastened "back to Jerusalem, seeking Him." But it was not till the next day (the third day from the day of starting) that they found Him, in a school of the Rabbis, or learned men, attached to the Temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors" (or professors), listening modestly to them, and "asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers." To His anxious mother's complaint, "Son, why hast Thou dealt thus with us?" Jesus answered, "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about *My Father's* business?"¹ (See Note 4.)

¹ This reply of Jesus has been called the "first word of the Eternal Spirit in the human spirit of the Person of the God-Man."

Once more we lose sight of the holy Youth; and amongst the secluded hills of Galilee, in private and humble life, He passes eighteen more years before we see Him again, and then it is as the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world.

NOTES—LESSON III.

1. "*With the title of Caesar Augustus.*" The name "Cæsar" in the New Testament does not refer to any one Roman Emperor in particular, since it was the general title of all the Roman Emperors, much in the same way as "Pharaoh" was the dynastic appellation of the Egyptian kings.

2. "*And laid Him in a manger*" (Luke ii. 7). "It is common to find," says a late missionary in Palestine, "two sides of a room where the native farmer resides with his cattle, filled up with these mangers, and the remainder elevated two feet higher for the accommodation of the family. These mangers are built of small stones and mortar in the shape of a box or kneading-trough; and when cleaned up and white-washed, as they often are in summer, they do very well to lay little babies in. Indeed our own children have slept there in our rude summer retreats in the mountains."—Dr. THOMSON, *The Land and the Book*.

3. "*When Jesus had completed His twelfth year,*" etc. In ordinary Jewish families the parents were the teachers of their children; though after the Babylonish Captivity, when the father was frequently engaged in commerce, and consequently often absent from his family, schools were established. The mother was still, however, the child's earliest teacher in New Testament times. When a boy had completed his twelfth year he was presented to the Lord, and inducted into

the community in a solemn and impressive manner. He would now of course attend the Festivals with his parents, and accordingly we read that when Jesus "was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem" (Luke ii. 42).

4. "*My Father's business*" (Luke ii. 49). It is supposed that at this time Jesus awoke to the consciousness of His own Divinity. It has been said:—"The Divinity that dwelt in Him from His conception manifested itself to His humanity by degrees, in proportion to His capacity." We must beware of the Apollinarian error of denying to Christ a human mind and soul capable of growth, and subject to limitations during His humiliation.

LESSON IV.

THE CALL TO REPENTANCE—OUR LORD'S BAPTISM AND
TEMPTATION—REJECTION AT NAZARETH—RETIRES TO
CAPERNAUM. (iii. iv.)

THE Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. The Messiah had come. The King of Israel was about to manifest Himself to His chosen people. But were they ready to receive Him? to welcome Him? Would He find them meet subjects for His spiritual kingdom?

Nationally, as we have said, from the highest to the lowest they were corrupt. The barren fig-tree was their type (see Manual I., St. Matthew, pp. 62, 63),—the leaves of a boastful and hypocritical profession—self-righteousness—no fruit—these were their characteristics. Priests, Scribes, Pharisees, rulers and people, had alike become polluted, and needed a holy ablution—a thorough purification—a complete change of heart and life.

This was the state of things, when ("in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judæa, and Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee") a great preacher of repentance (St. John the Baptist, son of Zacharias) suddenly arose, and a voice was heard from the lonely wildcr-

ness, sternly calling upon *the whole nation* to forsake their evil ways, and saying,—“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. . . . Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” But to those who, like the Pharisees, came to him in hypocrisy and without true repentance, his words were still more severe:—“O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” He gave, besides, to each class of persons (as St. Luke alone tells us) the exhortation they specially required (see iii. 11, 13, 14).

Nor was St. John's preaching in vain; daily in the abundant waters of the Jordan he baptized the multitudes that came to him from every quarter. And he warned them that a Mightier One was coming Who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire; gathering the wheat into His garner, but burning up the chaff with fire unquenchable.

The accounts of our Lord's Baptism by the first three Evangelists are very similar; but St. Luke alone tells us that He was “praying” when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him (iii. 21).

Immediately after His Baptism and anointing with the Holy Ghost, Jesus encountered Satan's temptations in the wilderness, as is related by the first three Evangelists.

For forty days our Lord needed not the sustenance of food, for His soul was so filled with the Holy Ghost, and, we may suppose, with joy at His Father's recognition, that for the time the wants of the body were

unfelt or unheeded; but afterward He hungered, and perhaps His soul was less sustained by the Spirit and by the full shining of His Father's face.

Then it was that the Evil One (who had tempted Him all through the forty days; iv. 2) came with his fiercest and sharpest attacks.

Temptation itself, we should remember, is not sin; the yielding to it is the sin. Jesus was tempted, but sinless. Our Lord could have exercised His miraculous power to remove the Tempter from His presence; but, as man, He was to be tempted in all points like as we are; and therefore used no other weapon than the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God—the weapon that may be wielded by the weakest of His people. "And the devil said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."

"If Thou be the Son of God"—"hungry, faint, weak, weary, lonely, forsaken, canst Thou suppose Thou art indeed God's well-beloved Son? But if Thou art, why suffer the pangs of hunger? command this stone that it be made bread." And so he tried to seduce our Lord from that entire dependence which, as a sinless man and as our example, He placed upon God. Christ never did a miracle for His own glory or advantage. He did the will of God, and left to Him the supply of His natural wants; and so He answered, "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Deut. viii. 3). Man is not nourished by nature apart from God, but by God acting through nature.

Then the Tempter spread out before the Lord "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." "Do me homage, and all shall be Thine." These were his

easy terms. Will Christ take His kingdom at once, and seize the crown without enduring the cross? Is this His Father's will? His anger was kindled at the offer of this glittering bribe and its blasphemous condition. "Get thee behind Me, Satan," was His stern rebuke; "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Deut. x. 20).

Once more the scene was changed, and our Lord stood with His tempter upon a pinnacle (or high roof) of the Temple; and the Devil said to Him, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence: *for it is written*, He shall give His Angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." And so the Evil One, by quoting Scripture, assumed the guise of an angel of light. To depend upon God's protecting care in the hour of danger, and when in the way that He appoints us, is faith;—to rush needlessly into peril for our own gratification, expecting God to carry us safely through it, is presumption; as indeed is made plain by our Lord's answer, "Thou shalt not *tempt* the Lord thy God" (Deut. vi. 16). Then the Devil "departed from Him *for a season*" (iv. 13).

The exact way in which these temptations were brought about—whether our Lord stood bodily upon the "high mountain" and on "the pinnacle of the Temple," or was in these places only "in the spirit"¹—

¹ Compare 2 Cor. xii. 3, "Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth," where St. Paul's expression of doubt, as to the nature of the revelation, cannot be supposed for one moment to throw any doubt upon its *reality*. As we must believe that our Lord saw "all the kingdoms of the world" (Greece and Rome probably) *in the spirit*, so we may well believe it was *in the spirit* also that He stood "on the pinnacle of the Temple."

we cannot positively know, nor is it a matter for mere speculation. It is sufficient for us to feel assured (and this is plainly asserted) that the Evil One was present to our Lord in his own proper person, and that the temptation was *from without*, and not *from within*.

Baptized, anointed with the Holy Ghost, declared by the voice from Heaven to be God's beloved Son, acknowledged by the last and greatest of the prophets as the Messiah of Israel, our Lord now manifested Himself to His people, and began the work of His ministry in Judæa, which for some nine months continued to be the field of His labours.

About this early Judæan ministry the three first Evangelists are entirely silent. Our Lord thus gave the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests—the religious leaders and rulers of the people of every kind—the opportunity of acknowledging Him; and it was not till after His rejection by them—when His life was no longer safe in that province over which their influence was most powerful—that He “returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee,” and “taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all” (iv. 14, 15). “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read” (iv. 16). Thus we learn that the Son of God, during the long years of His lowly life at Nazareth, humbly worshipped with His fellow-townsmen.

But now His fame as a Teacher and a doer of miracles induced the people of Nazareth to listen to Him Whom they still believed to be simply the “son of Joseph.” The service of the synagogue proceeded as usual. The “ruler” read the prayers,

while the people, standing, answered Amen. Singing of the psalms followed, then the first and second lessons—the one taken from the Law, the other from the Prophets—which were usually read standing by any of the Rabbis who might be present ; and, lastly, the “word of exhortation.” In the instance before us, when the time came for the second lesson, the “minister,” or servant of the synagogue,¹ handed the prophecies of Isaiah to our Lord, Who, unrolling the sacred book, read that portion of it that refers to the anointing of the Messiah with the Holy Ghost (Isa. lxi. 1, 2). “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised ; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” “And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?” (vv. 17-22).

We have here but the first sentence of our Lord’s commentary on the prophecy, which, according to custom, He had sat down to deliver ; but it caused pride and jealousy to burn in the people of Nazareth. “Is not this Joseph’s son?” Does *He* indeed claim to be the Messiah? And they were offended at Him. But

¹ An official answering, to some extent, to the clerk or vergers of our own churches.

our Lord told them that no prophet is accepted in his own country; and He warned them of the consequences of their unbelief. When the Israelites rejected their own prophets, the blessings that might have been theirs were given to strangers and Gentiles, as in the instances of the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian.¹ This was more than they could bear. Does He (the son of Joseph) claim to be a great prophet like Elijah or Elisha, or—greater still—the Messiah? Does He reprove them, and hold up Gentiles to them as examples? Their anger was unbounded. They rose up, and expelled Him from the synagogue and from the town, nay, in their blind fury, they led Him to the “brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way, and came down to Capernaum” (iv. 23-31; see Notes 1, 2, and 3).

However suitable an abode Nazareth had been for our Lord, on account of its seclusion (see Note 4), up to the commencement of His public life, it is not likely He would have continued to live there after His ministry had once begun, even if the incident just related had not taken place; but be this as it may, the city of Capernaum—in the most populous district of Palestine, on the great commercial highway from Damascus to the South and to the Mediterranean—now became the centre from which He made His circuits through Galilee, and it became “His own city.”

Here likewise He “taught them on the sabbath days; and they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power.” The cure of the demoniac

¹ The “Elias,” “Eliuseus,” and “Sarepta” of the text are the Greek forms of Elijah, Elisha, and Zarephath respectively.

(related also, as we have seen, by St. Mark, i. 21-28) took place in the synagogue at Capernaum; the Devil proclaiming our Lord to be "the Holy One of God" (Luke iv. 33-37): and on the same day, in Peter's house—which seems generally to have been His home at Capernaum—He cured Peter's wife's mother instantaneously of a "great fever," as St. Luke (the physician) distinguishes it.

Finally, "when the sun was setting," and the Jewish sabbath over, that striking scene took place, related also (as we have seen) by St. Matthew and St. Mark, where the "sick with divers diseases" crowded to the Great Physician, Who healed them "every one" (ver. 40), teaching us typically that Christ's all-embracing love cures every spiritual malady.

In the last verses of his fifth chapter (42-44) St. Luke tells us how the people sought the Lord in the desert place whither He had retired for prayer and communion with God, beseeching Him to remain with them; but "He said unto them, I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent. And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

NOTES—LESSON IV.

1. "*That they might cast Him down headlong*" (iv. 29). The ancient village of Nazareth stood, not on the summit but in a hollow—a green basin resting on a slip of table-land—a little below the topmost ridge, and on the western slope of a high hill. Just above is the "brow of the hill," and here is a rocky cliff, with steep descents, any one of which would have answered the purpose of the excited and angry Nazar-

enes. Casting down a precipice was a punishment sometimes inflicted for offences against religion, such as sacrilege or blasphemy.

2. "*Passing through the midst of them, went His way*" (iv. 30). We are not informed by what means our Lord effected His escape, and it is very much a matter of opinion amongst commentators whether it was by exerting His miraculous power, or simply by the majesty of His mien and awe-inspiring countenance, that we may suppose more than once acted like a spell upon men as turbulent as our Lord's fellow-townsmen of Nazareth.

3. "*Came down to Capernaum.*" The descent from the hills of Galilee (on one of which, as we have seen, Nazareth stood) to Capernaum, on the shores of the Lake Gennesaret, in the low lying valley of the Jordan, would be considerable. The expression therefore accurately describes the relative position of the two places.

4. "*Nazareth—on account of its seclusion.*" Shut in by gently rounded hills, its seclusion was perfect. "No great road," says a recent traveller, "led up to this sunny nook. No traffic came to it—no legions marched through it, Trade, war, adventure, pleasure, pomp, passed by it, flowing from west to east, from east to west, along the Roman road."

LESSON 7.

THE FIRST MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES—CALLING OF
ST. PETER AND THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE—CALLING OF
THE TWELVE APOSTLES—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.
(v., vi.)

THE multitudes that crowded around Jesus to hear the Word of God followed Him down to the Lake of Gennesaret, and so pressed upon Him, that, seeing two boats drawn up on the beach close to the water's edge, He got into one of them, and begged Simon, the owner of it, to push off a little way from the land, so that, as He sat in the boat, He might preach to the people standing along the shore. This done, He taught them out of the ship; and when His sermon was ended our Lord told Simon to launch out into the deep, and let down his nets for a draught. Simon answered, "Master, we have toiled all night, and taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." Then so many fishes were quickly enclosed in it that the net began to break, and with the help of their partners in the other boat, they filled both boats with fish so that they began to sink. Simon and his companions were not only astonished, but filled with awe; for by this sign our Lord had made known to them something of His own greatness, power, and holiness—that they, the

unholy, stood in the presence of the Holy One. So Simon "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" and this he said in the spirit of one suddenly made aware of his own guilt, weakness, and insufficiency, and not in the temper of those who beg Christ to depart because they desire not the knowledge of His ways. Our Lord's answer was accordingly one of peace and reassurance—"Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men;" and when they had brought the ship to land Simon and his brother Andrew, and their companions, James and John the sons of Zebedee, forsook all and followed Jesus.

Two, probably three, of these men had already been called by Christ (see John i. 40, 42, 45), but now they are to forsake all ordinary ties and occupations and to follow their Lord whithersoever He goeth. Yet this call was not at present to the Apostleship, but to a preliminary service.

On this occasion our Lord had preached more by acts than by words; and it was often so. His acts were symbolic. "The deeds of Him Who is the Word are themselves also, and are intended to be, words for us."¹ His miracles had a spiritual and typical teaching and significance. By this great draught of fishes how much had Simon Peter and his fellow-disciples been made to know both about themselves and Christ—about the great work for which Christ designed them—that of taking men in the Gospel net, and drawing multitudes of them to Christ and to His Church out of the troubled waters of the world.

In what, we may ask, did this miracle consist? A very great and even unusual haul of fish would not be

¹ St. Augustine, quoted by Trench.

of itself a miracle; but that it should coincide with our Lord's command to let down the net—with His word pledged beforehand—and that it should have such an evident connexion with our Lord's instruction of His Apostles—made that miraculous which otherwise would not have been so.

This call of the four disciples is related, as we have seen, by both St. Matthew (iv. 18-22) and St. Mark (i. 16-20); but with differences and omissions that have led some to see in St. Luke's account a record of quite a different event. St. Luke alone mentions our Lord's command to Simon to let down the net and the miraculous draught of fishes. The first two Evangelists tell us merely that the four disciples were called while engaged in their usual occupation of fishing.

Again, from the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark, it appears that this incident happened immediately upon Christ's arrival at Capernaum; while St. Luke places it after the cure of the demoniac in the synagogue, of Peter's wife's mother, and of the "sick with divers diseases." It is better, however, to reconcile, if possible, a few difficulties or even apparent discrepancies, than to evade them by supposing that events almost similar should be thus strangely repeated.

To take the last-mentioned difficulty—the difficulty of time—first. St. Luke's statement that he wrote "in order" applies rather "to a moral or logical sequence"¹ than to the order of events; and there are many proofs that St. Luke did not always follow the order of time. If so, the place of this call in his narrative proves nothing; but if it be a later and different one, how

¹ WESTCOTT, *Introduction to the Gospels.*

is it that the four disciples should be still engaged in their ordinary employment when St. Matthew and St. Mark expressly state that "they straightway forsook their nets and followed Him"? The Evangelists, like all independent and truthful narrators, report the same events from different aspects and more or less at length—dwelling upon or omitting certain details connected with them.

The three narratives may be harmonized as follows:—After the several incidents mentioned by St. Luke (the people pressing upon the Lord to hear His words—His entering Simon's boat and requesting him to push out a little from the land—the sermon from the boat—the miraculous haul of fishes—Simon's prayer, "Depart from me," as he falls down at Jesus' knees—Jesus' call of Simon and Andrew), He landed with these two disciples, and walking with them along the shore, came up with James and John, who had gone forward a short distance and were engaged in mending the broken nets. Then Jesus charged them, likewise, to follow Him and become fishers of men (v. 1-11).

The healing of a leper, the healing of a paralytic man at Capernaum, the calling and feast of St. Matthew, the new wine and the old bottles, the plucking of the ears of corn on the sabbath, the healing of the man with the withered hand, which are all related by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke in nearly the same language, have been already considered. In the healing of the man with the withered hand (Manual I. pp. 21-23, 31-35; Manual II. pp. 17-19) St. Luke alone mentions that it was his right hand—that it was the Scribes and Pharisees who watched the Lord—that He knew their thoughts—that the man "arose and

stood forth," and that the Scribes and Pharisees were "filled with madness" (vi. 6-11).

When our Lord wished for rest of mind and secret communion with His Father, He went to some retired spot among the mountains ; so now, escaping from the notice of His enemies, St. Luke tells us that He "went out into the hill country to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (vi. 12).

At this time, while in the hill country, our Lord chose the twelve Apostles (vi. 13-16) ; for "a great multitude of people" followed Him "out of Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases" (ver. 17), so that He had need of help. He called the Twelve from among those who were already more or less truly His disciples, "that they should be with Him" (as St. Mark tells us, iii. 13-19), "and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils."

Afterwards our Lord came down with them, and standing on a level spot (for so is the phrase in the original, by no means contradicting St. Matthew, who describes it as high up on the hill side), healed many, so that "the whole multitude sought to touch Him : for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all" (vi. 17-19). Then, "lifting up His eyes on His disciples," or gazing earnestly upon them, He delivered that discourse known as the "Sermon on the Mount," and which we have already considered. (See Manual I. pp. 15-17).

St. Matthew and St. Luke, under the aid and direction of the Holy Spirit, report this Sermon somewhat differently, each selecting such portions as seemed best

adapted to those for whom especially he wrote. St. Matthew, writing, as we have seen, for Jewish Christians, dwells upon what is peculiarly interesting or instructive to them, and gives at length Christ's reproof of the Pharisees and their self-righteousness; while St. Luke as naturally omits all that relates to Jewish sects or customs, and sets forth rather what is applicable to all mankind irrespective of race or country.

Taken as a whole, the resemblances in the two discourses are greater than their differences. They begin alike and end alike, and such passages as they have in common follow a like order. Hence their being spoken at different times, in view too of the circumstances under which they were delivered, is most improbable; and the aim of the Evangelists, it must be borne in mind, was "not so much to confine our minds to one set of *words*, as if they were or could be a full exponent of Christ's meaning, as to declare what was in the *mind* of Christ."¹ (See Note 1.)

The reports of the two Evangelists in many respects supplement and explain each other.

St. Luke's account of our Lord's discourse commences with four beatitudes, counterbalanced by four woes. The corresponding beatitudes in St. Luke and St. Matthew are as follows:—

"Blessed be ye poor" (Luke vi. 20).

"Blessed are the poor *in spirit*" (Matt. v. 3).

"Blessed are ye that hunger now" (Luke vi. 21).

"Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. v. 6).

"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake" (Luke vi. 22).

¹ Bishop Wordsworth.

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you falsely, for My sake" (Matt. v. 11).

The following passages should be compared :—

The law of love and the law of retaliation.

Luke vi. 27-36; Matt. v. 38-48.

Charity in judging of others.

Luke vi. 37-42; Matt. vii. 1-6.

The words "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," are given only by St. Luke. Also the words about the folly of the blind leading the blind, and the impossibility of the disciple rising to a higher standard than his teacher.

The identity of the Sermon recorded by two Evangelists is also evident from the concluding verses of each, which speak of men being known by their works as trees by their fruit; and the safety of those who build upon Christ (Luke vi. 43-49; Matt. vii. 15-27).

NOTE—LESSON V.

1. Differences of time, audience, and place have been alleged against the identity of these discourses; but they disappear upon a closer examination. The Evangelists, in relating events, do not always (as we have seen) group them together in the order in which they happened. The slightly different language in the enumeration of districts used by St. Matthew (iv. 25) and St. Mark (vi. 17) does not imply any real dissimilarity of audience; but simply that the people came from all parts. Nor, from the two accounts, need any difference of locality be argued. St. Matthew tells us that our Lord "went up into a mountain" (v. 1), St. Luke that He stood "in the plain" (vi. 17), or, more correctly, "*on a level place*;" which may very well mean a level place upon the side of a hill.

LESSON VI.

THE CENTURION AND HIS SERVANT—THE WIDOW OF NAIN
—ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S QUESTION—THE ANOINTING
BY THE PENITENT WOMAN—PARABLE OF THE TWO
DEBTORS—SIMON AND THE SINNER. (vii.)

FROM the narratives both of St. Matthew and St. Mark the healing of the centurion's servant, or favourite slave¹ (already briefly considered; see Lesson IV., Manual I.), seems to have taken place on the day of our Lord's return from the mount. St. Luke relates the miracle at greater length than St. Matthew, and differs from him in several particulars; but there is no real contradiction in the two accounts. St. Matthew informs us that "when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant" (or slave) "lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." St. Luke says, "Now when He had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal

¹ Slaves were not unfrequently taken into their master's confidence as private secretaries or as tutors to their children.

his servant." Thus, according to one Evangelist, the centurion came himself to our Lord, while from the other it is clear that he came only by deputy; but this exchange of persons—this speaking of a person as doing himself what he really does only by others—is not uncommon in historical narrative.

This centurion was not one in whom we should naturally have expected to see any true faith in His work or person, or any regard for the Jewish people. He was a Roman and a soldier. He belonged to a people who despised the Jews. He was of the conquering race, and came as a master amongst the people of Capernaum (if indeed we may assume that Capernaum was his place of residence). Yet he had won their love and gratitude. The Jewish elders came to our Lord to plead the cause of this stranger, and they said "that he was worthy for whom He should do this, for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue" (vii. 4, 5); or, as it might be rendered, "at his own expense he built us our synagogue." He was then a proselyte (see Note 1) or convert to the Jewish religion, and as such had been admitted to some of the privileges of the chosen people; though between him and them there was still that "middle wall of partition" which Christ was soon to take away for ever. As a proselyte he would be familiar with the Jewish expectations and longings for the Messiah; while his humility and piety, which are evident throughout the narrative, would dispose him to put faith in our Lord as the Promised One. The kindliness of his disposition is also remarkable. He was in trouble, not for an only son or some near and dear relative, but for a servant—a slave, whose life he could have made bitter

with hard service and cruel treatment. Let us look at the evidences of his faith and humility. Considering himself unworthy to go in person to Christ, he sent the Jewish elders to Him, with the request that He would come and heal his servant; but his growing humility and sense of sinfulness made him shrink from receiving the Lord into his house. So he "sent friends to Him, saying, Lord, trouble not Thyself; for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come to Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." And we are told that "when Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (vv. 6-9).

And so from this Roman centurion of times long past, feeling his way towards the true Light, we may learn a spiritual lesson; for we see in him a humility, a sense of unworthiness and helplessness—of his own exceeding need and Christ's great love and compassion—that is now as then the truest evidence of that faith which is acceptable to God—of the faith that justifies, because it takes the sinner to Christ and unites him to Christ.

Wonderful as was this cure of a dying man by a word and at a distance, a still mightier exercise of Divine power was beheld by the people of "a city called Nain." This place, probably only a small village or country town (for the word city in Gospel history often means nothing more), lay on the northern slope of the hill of Little Hermon, about twenty-five miles south of Capernaum. Our Lord started from Capernaum, pro-

bably, early in the morning, and we may suppose Him to have reached Nain by mid-day or a little after, with "many of His disciples and much people" (vii. 11).

In this beautiful story, related by St. Luke only, in words eloquent in their simplicity and tenderness, how clearly is the whole scene brought before us—Jesus, and the many people with Him, weary and wayworn, toiling up the ascent to the one gate, probably, that admitted to the town (see Note 2)—the sad funeral procession passing out of the city—the slow march of the bier (a framework of wood) on which the dead man was carried, the only son of a widowed mother—the bitter sorrow of that mother—the many people of the city with her sharing in the grief they could not assuage—the Saviour's compassionate "Weep not"—the sudden halt as He touched the bier and the bearers stood still—the breathless expectation of every one when Jesus spoke those words of power, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise"—the mingled awe, amazement, and joy when "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." And our Lord "delivered" (or gave) "him to his mother;" so that "there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people" (vii. 12-16).

To St. John the Baptist, lying in his prison at Machærus, were reported these miracles of our Lord, especially, no doubt, that notable one, the raising of the widow's son at Nain, and probably also His unceasing labours, His choice of Apostles, His words no less than His works. Being unable to go himself, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus, with the message, "Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?" Our Lord did

not reply to this immediately, but answered by deeds; for "in that same hour He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight." He let John's disciples judge with their own eyes whether His works were such as the Messiah would do; and then, "answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached:" and here is the added warning, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (vii. 18-23)—"Blessed is he whose faith in My Work and Mission shall not be shaken or overthrown."

Are we to suppose that the great Forerunner asked the Lord, "Art Thou He that should come? or do we look for another?" to set at rest any doubt of his own, or only to satisfy his disciples? Did the Baptist for a moment question the Messiahship of Him on Whom he had seen the Holy Ghost descending in a bodily shape, while a voice from Heaven declared Him to be God's "beloved Son"?

This seems at first sight so impossible, that certain Fathers of the ancient Church (St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine) and many modern commentators believe that St. John the Baptist's sole motive was to convince his disciples.

Others maintain that it arose from an impatient longing for our Lord's full manifestation as the Messiah, and so look upon it as an intimation that Jesus should now put forth in direct act that resistless power of which He had just shewn Himself to be possessed. "Art Thou the Messiah? Act then as the

Messiah. Thou canst raise the dead. Thou canst fulfil all the Covenant promises to the patriarchs and prophets. Purge Thy floor; gather the wheat into Thy garner; and baptize with the Holy Ghost."¹

On the other hand it has been thought—by Tertulian amongst the Fathers and by authorities of our own time—that St. John the Baptist's question did really imply a doubt in his own mind. His long imprisonment—he had passed one dreary winter in that lonely fortress by the Dead Sea—had produced despondency and some misgivings; and this appears to be the *natural* interpretation of the passage, for our Lord's reply is clearly directed to St. John himself—"Go, tell John . . ."

If it be so, however, the Baptist was faithful even in his doubts; for he applied to the Lord Himself for their solution—"the strong man in his great conflict clung publicly to the Stronger;"² and it is both instructive and comforting to know that even the holiest are sometimes permitted to doubt.

The anointing by the penitent woman related by St. Luke (vii. 37-50) is distinct from that mentioned by the three other Evangelists (Matt. xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9; John xii. 3).

This woman was a sinner—that is, one who was known as leading then, or as having led in times past, an immoral life.³ Simon in his own mind condemned our Lord, either for lack of that discernment of spirits

¹ ANDREWS' *Life of our Lord*.

² Lange.

³ There appears to be no reason for supposing, as some have done, that this woman was Mary Magdalene—one of the honourable women who ministered to the Lord of their substance, and attended Him in His journeys.

which is a gift of the true prophet ("this man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is"), or, if He knew the woman's character, for accepting her homage. But that his guest was a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart he soon had proof, for the Lord placed before him exactly what was passing in his own mind.

In the parable of the two debtors, spoken by our Lord upon this occasion (vii. 41-50), there are two or three points that require consideration.

1. Are we to suppose that because he loves most who is forgiven most, that the further a man departs from God, and the more wicked and profligate his life, the greater will be his love to God and the higher his place in God's favour if brought back to Him? This is not so in fact, nor is it our Lord's meaning. Our Lord means rather, that he whose *sense* of sin and its exceeding sinfulness is strongest—although not guilty, it may be, of outward and notorious transgression—will rejoice most in a Redeemer (a Deliverer from sin and from its penalty), and will therefore love most.

2. The second point that needs explanation is the phrase—"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." Our Lord intends it to be understood, not that her love *caused* her forgiveness, but that her gratitude *proved* it. This is clear from the previous parable. Her forgiveness was due to the *faith* which, in the first instance, brought her as a penitent to Christ. This is shewn by our Lord's concluding words, "Thy faith hath saved thee;" nor must we omit to notice the Divine dignity with which our Lord assumes the prerogative of forgiving sin when, turning to the penitent woman, He spoke those words, so precious

to her, so offensive to those who sat at meat with Him—"Thy sins are forgiven" (vii. 48).

NOTES—LESSON VI.

1. "*He was then a proselyte.*" According to the Talmud (a manual of Jewish traditions and ritual law, with commentaries), proselytes, or converts to the Jewish faith, were of two kinds or classes; namely, proselytes of the gate and proselytes of righteousness.

Proselytes of the gate (the term being derived from the phrase "the stranger that is within thy gates" (Exod. xx. 10) were not required to observe the whole ceremonial law; nor were they, on the other hand, admitted to all the privileges of the Israelites; and the study of the law was strictly forbidden to them. The Roman centurion mentioned by St. Luke (vii. 2-10; Acts x. 1, 2) and the devout persons (xvii. 4) are supposed to have been proselytes of the gate.

Proselytes of righteousness were admitted to full communion with the Jewish Church. They were consequently circumcised, and afterwards (it is said) baptized.

LESSON VII.

THE MINISTRY IN GALILEE CONTINUED AND BROUGHT TO A CLOSE—ST. LUKE'S APPENDIX—OUR LORD'S GREAT JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM—THE SAMARITANS WILL NOT RECEIVE HIM—THE QUESTIONS OF THE LAWYER—LEADING CHARACTERISTIC OF ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL TRACED IN HIS PARABLES—ST. LUKE'S PARABLES—THE GOOD SAMARITAN—THE SCENE OF THE PARABLE. (viii—x.)

OUR Lord now continued His ministry in Galilee; for St. Luke tells us that "afterward He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God: and the twelve were with Him" (viii. 1); but whether the start was made from Nain or from Capernaum is not certain. If from Capernaum it would be the beginning of a new circuit, and one of considerable duration is implied.

At this time we first hear of "certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities" gratefully following the footsteps of our Lord and ministering to Him of their substance. These were Mary Magdalene (or Mary of Magdala), Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna (mentioned only in this place), and many others. Whether, henceforth, their

attendance was constant is not expressly stated in the Gospel narrative, but from what St. Luke tells us in another chapter (xxiii. 55) it seems probable.

Our Lord began at this time to teach the people by parables, which had long been a favourite method of instruction throughout the East. Why was this? Jesus Himself answered the question when He said to His disciples, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries" (or doctrines) "of the Kingdom of God : but to others in parables ; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand" (viii. 10). Our Lord could not explain these mysteries to the multitude, for they followed Him more from curiosity, wonder or anxiety for the cure of some bodily ailment, than from any desire of spiritual good. Of the parables spoken by our Lord at this time St. Luke records only the parable of the sower.

The three first Evangelists all speak of the visit of the mother of Jesus and His brethren, but St. Luke places it differently, and without any mention of the time at which it occurred. It is clear, however, that our Lord would not allow any human relationship to interfere with His Father's work.

That our Lord crossed the lake, with His disciples, in a south-easterly direction, to Gergesa (or, as St. Luke says, to the country of the Gadarenes)—calmed the sea, when the storm burst suddenly upon them—landed the next morning on the coast opposite Galilee—healed the demoniac, and returned again to Galilee, where the people received Him gladly—all this is recorded by St. Luke (viii. 22-40). Then follows the healing of the woman with the issue of blood—the raising of Jairus's daughter—the sending forth of the

twelve Apostles—Herod's perplexity concerning Christ—the feeding of the five thousand—the confession of St. Peter—Jesus foretelling His Passion—the Transfiguration—the healing of the lunatic child—the reasoning of the disciples which of them should be the greatest, and the lesson in humility from a little child. These particulars of our Lord's ministry are recorded also by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and have already been briefly considered (see Manual I., pp. 21-51).

Here (ix. 51) a break occurs in St. Luke's narrative (corresponding to the break at Matt. xix. 1 and Mark x. 1), and a section of nearly nine chapters (ix. 51—xviii. 14) follows, which has much perplexed commentators. Some commentators, noticing the frequent allusions to *journeyings*, have supposed it to contain a narrative of our Lord's sayings and doings, on those three journeys towards Jerusalem indicated in St. John's Gospel. To the journey up to the Feast of Tabernacles (John vii. 10) they assign Luke ix. 51—xiii. 22. To the journey from Peræa to Bethany (John xi. 7) they refer Luke xiii. 22—xviii. 31. And to the final circuitous journeyings from Ephraim (John xi. 54), through Samaria and Galilee, to Jericho, is given Luke xvii. 11—xviii. 35.

But this scheme for harmonizing St. Luke and St. John's Gospels is beset with difficulty. And others have preferred to regard the whole section as an Appendix to the Gospel, containing a collection of anecdotes and discourses for which no place had been found in the orderly narrative, and which St. Luke intercalated here, wishing to reserve his concluding chapters for the Passion and Resurrection. In favour of this view may be alleged the unconnected way in

which many of the anecdotes are introduced, as if St. Luke meant us to understand that they were not given in chronological sequence, see especially xi. 1, xiii. 10, and xiv. 1; also the fact that portions of the Sermon on the Mount are embodied in this section; and lastly, that if the section be cut out, and ix. 50 joined on to xviii. 15, we should have very much the same order as in St. Matthew and St. Mark, the blessing of the young children following soon after the dispute "who should be greatest," which seems to have occurred at Capernaum just before they started on the final journey to Jerusalem.

Whichever view of this section we adopt, we may safely assume that most of its anecdotes (whether given in chronological order or not) belong to that final progress to Jerusalem. As this journey is a very important one, it will be well to take some pains to understand the peculiar meaning attached to it.

Our Lord's reason for bringing His Galilæan ministry to a close was doubtless the near approach of the time determined in His Father's Counsels for His return to Heaven. St. Luke indicates this very strikingly: "And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (ix. 51), where St. Luke gathers together all the concluding events of our Lord's ministry under the idea of a return to His Father.

Other secondary considerations also appeared to shew that the time had come to wind up the Galilæan ministry.

(1) St. Peter's recent confession seemed to imply that the Apostles were now prepared sufficiently for the approaching death. Peter had confessed that He

was "the Christ of God" (ix. 20), or, as St. Matthew has recorded it, "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (xvi. 16). But though the twelve disciples understood our Lord's Divine Sonship, and were persuaded that He was the promised Redeemer, it was not so with the Galilæans.

(2) The Galilæans were not likely to profit further by our Lord's residence among them. They looked upon Him as the Prophet of Galilee, and nothing more; and while this was true of the people, their religious leaders were His most determined enemies, and at last through their influence it became both useless and dangerous to prolong the ministry in Galilee. Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and the other places where most of our Lord's miracles had been done, had not listened to His call to repentance, and brought upon themselves the judgment that He pronounced against them (x. 13-15).

One trial more our Lord determined to make. He would shew Himself as Messiah not to the Galilæans only, but to the whole Jewish people. His words and works had proclaimed Him to be the Messiah; but notwithstanding these he was despised and rejected of men. He will now make a long circuit through the whole length of the land, sending before Him the seventy disciples as heralds, to bear witness to His Messiahship; to tell people that the Kingdom of God is at hand, and the Son of David, the King of Israel, the Christ of God, is about to visit them. And so Jesus set out, with many people following Him, journeying always towards Jerusalem—His face steadfastly set to go thither: and St. Luke tells us how, on His way, while He taught the people, He continually

kept His disciples in mind of His betrayal and death, to be followed by a resurrection.

On leaving Galilee our Lord proposed to go through Samaria, and "sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem" (ix. 52, 53).

Another Evangelist tells us how on a former occasion, when our Lord was on His way to Galilee from Judæa, the Samaritans welcomed Him, listened to Him, and begged Him to stay with them; but now that Jesus was going to Jerusalem, with a great number of followers proclaiming Him to be the Messiah, all the Samaritan jealousy and hatred of the Jews was aroused, and they rejected Him. James and John, full of hopes, we may suppose, that their Lord was about to reign over His people, and restore the Kingdom to them, were for calling down immediate vengeance upon all who refused to acknowledge Him. But Jesus rebuked them for shewing a temper so contrary to that spirit of love which should govern the subjects of His new and heavenly Kingdom. Here St. Luke relates (without any note of time) our Lord's reply to certain men who would follow Him (ix. 57-60); and inasmuch as St. Matthew speaks of these same incidents as happening before the cure of the Gadarene demoniac (Matt. viii. 19-22), it is clear that St. Luke does not confine himself to this particular journey. And he adds another anecdote of one who would return to his home to bid his friends farewell before he followed the Lord (ix. 61, 62). Our Lord's answer shews, we may suppose, that this was a half-hearted disciple.

Giving up His intention of going through Samaria, our Lord now took quite another road, along the frontier of Galilee and Samaria towards the Jordan, which He crossed into Peræa or the country beyond the Jordan (Matt. xix. 1). His seventy disciples (as St. Luke alone relates) were "sent two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come" (x. 1); and great multitudes followed Him.

At what part of our Lord's progress the lawyer (or learned man skilled in the law of Moses) "stood up and tempted Him"—or sought to prove Him by a question—is not certain. The lawyer asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, clearly expecting some very profound answer. A gentle reproof is conveyed by Christ, referring the lawyer back to the very elements of his Bible for an answer. But the lawyer is not content, and presses our Lord with a further question, "I know my duty to my neighbour,—but *who is my neighbour?*" To this inquiry our Lord replied by the parable of the good Samaritan (see Note 2), by which He intended to correct the narrow views of His questioner and of the Jewish Rabbis on this matter, and to rebuke, at the same time, the feeling of hatred with which the Jews and the Samaritans regarded each other.

And so our Saviour clearly taught us all that our help to those in distress is not to be limited to those whom we may suppose have a claim upon us, but that, like the compassion of Him Who died for all men, it is to be extended, as far as our ability goes, to every one who needs it.

But this parable has been supposed to have a yet deeper and more spiritual meaning, and to shadow

forth the love of Christ to the whole human race. We had fallen into the hands of that Wicked One who is both a robber and a murderer. The law could not save us. Sacrifices could not take away sin (Heb. x. 1, 4). "Patriarch and prophet and priest passed us by, helpless both in will and deed, for they themselves also lay wounded in that wounded man. Only that true Samaritan, beholding, was moved with compassion, as He is all compassion, and poured oil into the wounds, that is Himself into the hearts, purifying all hearts by faith."¹ (Rom. viii. 3.)

The parables peculiar to the *first* and *second* Gospels are such as might have been expected from the character of those Gospels. St. Matthew's are often parables of judgment. His Gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom, and in it we see the Son of Man "gathering out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and casting them which do iniquity into a furnace of fire" (xiii. 41, 42)—delivering the wicked servant to the tormentors (xviii. 34)—destroying the wicked husbandmen (xxi. 41)—burning up the city of the murderers (xxii. 7)—closing the doors against the foolish virgins, and casting the unprofitable servant into outer darkness (xxv. 7, 30).

St. Luke's parables, if not so grand, are more tender. They are more or less parables of mercy; and we are told of the tree that was spared (xiii. 6)—of the Samaritan saving the life of the Jew who hated him (x. 30-37)—and of the father welcoming back his prodigal but repentant son (xv. 20).

After the parable of the good Samaritan St. Luke introduces (but not in the order of time) an anecdote

¹ Archbishop Trench.

of that family of Bethany, of which we shall hear more in St. John's Gospel. The picture is interesting and instructive. Two sisters, Martha and Mary, are entertaining their Lord. Martha, in her anxiety to do Him honour, is distracted and troubled about much serving, while her sister Mary sits at His feet and listens to His words; choosing thus that better part which could not be taken away from her.

NOTES—LESSON VII.

1. *Parables and their interpretation.* A parable is a short story by means of which spiritual truths are set forth. It has been likened to "a casket of exquisite workmanship, but in which jewels yet richer than itself are laid up," and again, to a "fruit which, however lovely to look upon, is yet in its inner sweetness more delectable still." In considering, then, the interpretation of parables, we are looking, as it were, for the golden key that shall open the casket, or seeking how best to get at the kernel hidden from us by its outer covering.

In interpreting parables two errors have to be avoided:—

(1) We are not to be contented with giving a meaning to one or two principal points while leaving everything else unexplained. The interpretation is to be as complete as possible; remembering that the more perfect a parable is the more completely will every part of it bear a spiritual application; and this we find to be the case in our Lord's interpretation of the two first parables spoken by Him (Matt. xiii. 19, 23).

(2) On the other hand, we must beware of such a pressing of every part as would amount to an ingenious trifling with the Word of God.

There are one or two rules that may assist us in the interpretation of parables, and which it will be safe to follow:—

(a) We should aim, first of all, to discover the main doctrine or truth that the parable is intended to set forth; for in proportion as we seize this shall we be likely to give a right interpretation to all the lesser particulars of the story.

(b) A great help towards a right interpretation is generally to be found in paying a strict attention to "the saying which introduces and winds up the parable." This is rarely wanting. See Luke xii. 16-20; also Matt. xviii. 23, xx. 1-15.

2. The traveller from Jerusalem to Jericho in the time of our Lord, leaving Jerusalem by its eastern gate and crossing the Mount of Olives, would, on passing Bethany, be in the direct road to that famous city, and here he began a long descent of three thousand feet over bare limestone hills, and through a wild, desolate and desert country, until, after a journey of six hours' duration, he came in sight of the rich valley in which stood what was then one of the most important cities of Palestine—Jericho, the stately city of palms. The robbers, whose deeds of blood made this part of the country the dread of the wayfarer, came down from the caves of the overhanging mountains which harboured them, and lurking behind the rocks of this rugged way, seized the traveller, plundered him, and left him naked and wounded to die of want and exposure. This illustrates our Lord's description of the plight of the traveller in the parable.

LESSON VIII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER—ST. LUKE'S VERSION COMPARED WITH ST. MATTHEW'S—THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT—HEALING OF THE DUMB-POSSESSED AND ACCUSATION OF THE PHARISEES—PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL—PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE—HEALING OF THE WOMAN WITH THE SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY—HEALING OF THE MAN WITH THE DROPSY²—PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER. (xi—xiv.)

ST. LUKE tells us (xi. 1) that as our Lord was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as also John taught his disciples." The prayer here recorded agrees entirely in sense with that delivered in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 9-15), and the verbal differences are slight. The words "Give us this day" (Matt. vi. 11) are here rendered "Give us day by day" (xi. 3). In St. Matthew we read again "as we forgive" (vi. 12). Here the phrase is "for we also forgive" (xi. 4). The meaning, however, is the same. Our prayer for forgiveness must always be accompanied by an act of forgiveness on our part. We do not pray "forgive us our sins as we are wont to forgive," but "as we hereby forgive"—while on our knees. Even supposing our Lord's words to have been the same

on the two occasions, just such variations would be found in two independent reports of them; and some difference in the choice of words would occur when the Evangelists translated the prayer into Greek from the Aramaic or Syro-Chaldaic language, in which, probably, our Lord spoke.

The short parable of *the friend at midnight* (xi. 5-8) that follows, teaches the lesson of *perseverance* in prayer—that if selfish people will grant a petition because of our importunity, how much *more* (though from a far different motive—the contrast being intended to give force to the parable) will our Father in Heaven attend to our requests. And when, for the trial of our faith, He delays His answer, we are invited to pray with increasing urgency—though always in submission to His will in temporal matters especially. We are to ask—seek—knock—until the moment arrives for God to bestow according to our faith (vv. 9-13).

Our Lord's healing of the dumb man possessed by an evil spirit could not be denied by His enemies, but they blasphemously said "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils" (xi. 15); meaning not only this miracle, but that all His miracles—all He did—had the same origin; that the Spirit of God in Him was the spirit of the Wicked One.

Whether the Pharisee who invited our Lord to eat at his house (xi. 37) did so from real hospitality, or to satisfy his curiosity by seeing more of the famous Galilæan Teacher, so mighty in word and deed, or whether it was done in guile to further the plots of his party, we have no certain means of ascertaining; but that he was moved by no very friendly spirit seems probable from his suspicious observance of his guest,

and his marked displeasure when our Lord designedly omitted one of those outward ceremonies which the Pharisees observed so scrupulously, to the utter neglect of real piety of heart and life. All this our Lord rebuked, denouncing, not so much this particular Pharisee, as the principles of his sect; and how deeply His words offended them—with what malignity they listened to them—is evident from the behaviour of the assembled Scribes and Pharisees (xi. 53, 54).

Multitudes of people still followed our Lord, “inso-much that they trod one upon another” (xii. 1); and in the presence and hearing of the people, He exhorted His disciples, telling them to beware of the leaven, or hypocrisy, of the Pharisees, and warning them not to fear those who can kill the body only, but to fear Him Who “hath power to cast into hell” (xii. 5).

One of our Lord’s hearers, unable to wait for a more convenient season, and thinking more of his temporal interests than of any spiritual good he might get from our Lord’s teaching, interrupted it, apparently, by eagerly requesting Jesus to judge between himself and his brother: “Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.” But our Lord would not act as a judge in such matters, for His mission was spiritual; but He seized the occasion to warn men against covetousness and the love of riches. “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (xii. 13-15). Our Lord’s words might be still more closely rendered:—“Not even in the case of a man having great abundance does his life consist in his goods.” *Life* depends on God—not on our goods, however abundant they may be; and still less

does our spiritual life consist in the possessions and riches of this world ; for these things too often hinder it, or even choke it altogether. In the parable of the man who laid up treasure, but was not rich toward God, the same truth is taught. It is a picture of a rich, avaricious man hoarding his wealth, and giving himself up to the enjoyment of it. "I will pull down my barns and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee" (vv. 19, 20). This parable applies, however, not only to the wealthy man, but to *all* who, seeking only the things of this life and setting their affections on them, are not rich towards God (ver. 21).

Our Lord's discourse upon watchfulness which followed (vv. 35-48), enforced by the short parable of the faithful steward, corresponds with that recorded by St. Matthew (xxiv. 42-51).

Some people having told our Lord of certain Galilæans "whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices"—with the blood of the animals they were offering—He was led to discourse of God's judgments, their meaning, and His merciful delay in executing them. When some great calamity overtakes our fellow-creatures, and hundreds or thousands of them perish, how are we to regard it ? Are we to suppose that every one so visited by calamity has been specially sinful, and that others escaped because they did not deserve so to suffer ? or that we were kept in safety by reason of our worthiness ? No ; they are *solemn calls*

to repentance and *warnings* of coming judgments to all of us, unless we repent; for what our Lord said then to His own countrymen, He says now to us by His Evangelists, "Except ye repent, ye shall *all* likewise perish" (xiii. 3, 5).

These truths our Lord set forth in the parable of the barren fig-tree, and which is recorded by St. Luke alone (xiii. 6-9). In Scripture the doings of a man—his works of whatever nature—are fitly compared to fruit. Fruit shews the nature of the tree. A man's doings likewise shew what he is. They reveal his heart. In this parable the dresser of the vineyard did not at once cut down the barren tree. He spared it, dug about it, and brought nourishment to its roots. This represents the forbearance of God. God sends a man warnings, grants him a season of grace, and is ready to bestow His Spirit upon him if only he will seek it. Again, the hidden spiritual meaning of this parable concerns not only individual men, but the Jewish people. They had been God's Vineyard, as Isaiah witnessed, and Christ, the Master of the Vineyard, came, year after year, looking for fruit, but found none. He came by Moses, by the prophets, and lastly He came Himself, watering the tree, as it were, first by His own ministry, and then by the ministry of His Apostles. Then the axe was laid (in readiness) to the roots of the tree. Warning after warning was given of coming judgment; but neither first nor last did His people yield Him the fruit of faith, obedience and good works; and at length, forty years from the time of our Lord's Crucifixion, the Romans besieged Jerusalem, and destroyed it (see Manual II., pp. 70-72).

In this parable the dresser of the vineyard, who

pleads for the tree, is, Archbishop Trench says, "the Son Himself, the Intercessor for men (Job xxxiii. 23; Zech. i. 12; Heb. vii. 25);" and this appears to be plain from the command, "Cut it down," for to the Son alone all judgment is committed. In this case the owner of the vineyard is God the Father; but the phrase "came seeking fruit," applied to the owner, seems to point to Christ. If so, who then is the Intercessor? This is a difficulty that cannot, perhaps, be quite cleared up, and as a difficulty we must be content to leave it.

In recording the healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity (xiii. 10-17)—*i.e.* an evil spirit causing infirmity—St. Luke makes no note of time and place, except that it was in a synagogue, and on the sabbath-day. The Pharisees, who, as we have seen, were banded together against the Lord, took every opportunity of shewing their hatred, and trying to bring Him into ill repute with the people. Our Lord worked miracles that they could not deny; but at one time they said it was by the power of Satan, at another that the law of the sabbath had been broken. Here was a woman painfully bowed together, and the Lord healed her; and she, full of joy and gratitude, glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, far from rejoicing with her, reproved the people, with pretended indignation, for coming to be healed on the sabbath-day. But the Lord spoke so severely of his hypocrisy that "all His adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him" (v. 17). Spiritually, this miracle teaches us, it is by the power of Christ that the soul bowed down by fleshly and carnal lusts rises to a new and heavenly life.

Whether there was any occasion for the warning

that certain of the Pharisees gave our Lord of Herod's intentions (ver. 31) has been doubted, and cannot be positively ascertained. It seems probable, however, that it was a hint from Herod to Jesus to leave his dominions, which he desired from some political or personal motive; otherwise Jesus would scarcely have replied by a message to him. Nor would our Lord have applied to him so severe an epithet, clearly implying some crafty conduct on his part.

Though it is possible that the Pharisee of high position who invited our Lord to eat bread at his house on the sabbath-day did so as a mark of respect, it is more probable that under this courtesy he concealed some evil intention, for "they watched Him" (xiv. 1).

According to Eastern customs, which permit strangers and lookers-on to enter a room in which a feast or meal is being held (see Note), the man with the dropsy might have been there without special leave from the host. He may have entered with the hope of being healed. Whether it was so or not, Jesus healed him, and then, turning to the lawyers and Pharisees, who had held their peace when He asked them whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath-day, He said, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?" And again they knew not what to answer Him.

It was at this entertainment that our Lord spoke the parable of *the great supper*; which is quite distinct from the parable of *the marriage of the king's son* related by St. Matthew (xxii. 1-14). Taking as an illustration the scene before Him, Jesus said, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent

his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready" (xiv. 16, 17). This call was quite according to Eastern custom, and was no reproach to those invited to partake it. Their slight, carelessness, or disrespect was in excusing themselves when summoned to the feast.

The whole parable is typical of the Jewish people and of God's dealings with them. They had been bidden to a supper. God had told them by His prophets of a coming kingdom in which they should share. Christ came and set up His spiritual kingdom in the world, and when all things were ready His chosen people, the bidden guests, were invited by the Apostles and Evangelists to the Gospel feast. But they all with one consent began to make excuse (vv. 18-20). The pride, the business, the pleasure of this world kept them from Christ. So, in the parable, when the servant shewed his lord these things—how one guest must go to look at his estate, a second is proving (or trying) his yoke of oxen, and a third is taken up with his own marriage feast—"the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" (ver. 21). The priests and elders, the Scribes and Pharisees—the guardians of the faith, the religious leaders of the people—refused the invitation, so it is now sent to the outcasts—the spiritually sick and needy. "And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast said, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (vv. 22, 23). This is believed to signify the call of the Gentiles into the Church

of Christ—the pagans of the outer world in the time of our Lord—whom His ministers will “compel” to come in ; not indeed by any outward force, but by earnest exhortation and persuasion.

This parable of the great supper (like the Gospel in which it is found) sets our Lord forth especially as the Redeemer of all men—ready to save to the uttermost—seeking out those who have departed farthest from God, and are most weary and heavy-laden.

NOTE—LESSON VIII.

“ According to Eastern customs, which permit strangers and lookers-on to enter a room in which a feast or meal is being held.” “ At dinner at the Consul’s house at Damietta we were much interested in observing a custom of the country. In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all round the walls. Many came in and took their places on those side-seats, uninvited and yet unchallenged. They spoke to those at table on business or the news of the day, and our host spoke freely to them. This made us understand the scene in Simon’s house at Bethany, where Jesus sat at supper, and Mary came in and anointed His feet with ointment ; and also the scene in the Pharisee’s house, where the woman who was a sinner came in uninvited and yet not forbidden, and washed His feet with her tears. We afterwards saw this custom at Jerusalem, and there it was still more fitted to illustrate these incidents.”
—Narrative of a Missionary, quoted by Trench.

LESSON IX.

PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST PIECE OF MONEY,
AND THE PRODIGAL SON. (xv.)

ST. LUKE, we have seen, delighted to dwell on that aspect of our Lord's character in which He appears as the Son of Man, having compassion on the ignorant, seeking the lost, calling sinners to repentance; and accordingly he tells us that "all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him for to hear Him" (xv. 1). They knew their sinfulness and their spiritual wants; and they saw in Jesus One Who seemed able to save—One Who did not spurn them—Who cared for them. But in proportion as our Lord's gracious words drew these towards Him, they repelled and offended the self-righteous, self-satisfied Pharisees and Scribes, and they "murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (ver. 2). They could not understand how it was that He Who claimed to be the Messiah could hold intercourse with people whose very touch would, to them, have been pollution. The three parables that follow our Lord meant especially for these murmurers. They were intended to shame them, by "holding up to them the angels of God, and God Himself, rejoicing at the conversion of a sin-

ner; and contrasting this liberal joy of Heaven with the narrow discontent and envious repinings of earth. Heaven and its holy inhabitants welcomed the penitent; only his fellow-sinners kept him proudly aloof, as though there had been defilement for them in his touch; as though they were wronged if he were freely forgiven."¹

Of these three parables, the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and the prodigal son, the first two set forth the *seeking* love of God, without which no sinner could return to Him. The third parable treats of that repentance and change in the heart of man that springs from it.

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (see Note 1.) The hidden meaning of the story refers both to the spiritual rulers (shepherds) of the Jewish people and to the individual sinner, whether Jew or Gentile.

These shepherds God had set over His people (see Ezek. xxxiv. 2), but they had not fed the flock, nor strengthened the diseased, nor healed the sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought again that which was driven away, *nor sought that which was lost* (ver. 4). Then, in connexion with the parable, how striking is God's answer: "For thus saith the Lord, *Behold I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out*" (ver. 11). Here, in the parable, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, does Himself ("I, even I") what the shepherds of Israel had neglected to do. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and His whole ministry was an unwearied following out of this. He seeks the lost

¹ Archbishop Trench.

sheep until He finds it, and then "layeth it on His shoulders"—His *own* shoulders, as the original signifies—"rejoicing;" and as in the parable the friends and the neighbours of the shepherd rejoice with him over the sheep that was lost, "so likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (xv. 3-7). More joy, that is, *for the time being*—supposing the ninety and nine just persons to be really such—sheep safe in the keeping of the Good Shepherd; just as we rejoice more, for the time, over one sheep or one coin that had been lost, than over the many that have ever remained in our safe keeping.

What class of persons the ninety and nine righteous stand for has, however, been much debated, and inasmuch as all need daily repentance for daily transgressions, some have supposed these to signify self-righteous people, who, like Pharisees, blindly suppose they need no repentance. "But," Archbishop Trench says, "the whole structure of the parable refutes this. The ninety and nine sheep have *not* wandered, the nine pieces of money have *not* been lost, the elder brother has *not* left his father's house. These difficulties will only disappear when we regard these '*righteous*' as such indeed, but their righteousness as merely legal, of the old dispensation, so that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than they. The law had partially accomplished its work in them, restraining from grosser transgressions; and thus they needed not, like the publicans and sinners, repentance from these; but it had not accomplished all, it had not been 'a school-master to Christ,' bringing them to see their sinfulness and consequent need of a Saviour."

In this parable of the lost sheep the sinner is likened to the silly wandering sheep going astray more from ignorance than wickedness—losing himself before he well knows what he is doing; but the lost piece of money stands, we may suppose, for those who, knowing that the image of God has been stamped upon their souls, have the greater sin of going astray wilfully.

The prodigal son has been well called “the crown and pearl of all our Lord’s parables,”¹ and “a Gospel within a Gospel.”²

The two sons in the parable (vv. 11, 12) represent the two classes who listened to our Lord’s words—the self-righteous and those who were far from righteousness; and in a secondary sense they may be types of the Jewish and Gentile nations, as supposed by some interpreters.

What most concerns us, however, is its spiritual interpretation and application. Spiritually, this parable is the history of the departure of the baptized Christian from God. In infancy made a member of Christ’s body; in after years rejoicing for a while possibly in these privileges, and in the love and favour of God, he nevertheless becomes weary of dependence upon God. His heart is turned away from Him. God’s service is no longer perfect freedom, and he desires the fancied liberty of those who own no master but their own will, and God, Who has given him that free will, permits him to make the trial.

In the parable, the departure of the younger son into the “far country,” and his life there, portrays the downward progress of him who has cast away all religious obligations and taken up his abode in the

¹ Stier.

² Lange.

land where God is not. Such an one becomes a God unto himself, and forgets his heavenly Father in the pleasures of sin.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want" (ver. 14). The pleasures of sin are but for a season, and are soon exhausted. Sooner or later the prodigal discovers how evil and bitter a thing it is to depart from the living God. A mighty spiritual famine—an utter want of all spiritual food—overtakes him, and besides God afflicts him with temporal misfortune, shewing in this way both His hatred of sin and his love for the sinner. "God hedges up his way with thorns, that he may not find his paths (Hos. ii. 6); makes his sin bitter to him, that he may abhor it." But the prodigal is too proud as yet to obey the call, and he has other remedies to try. He will "join himself to a citizen of the country" whither he has wandered. He will plunge deeper into sin, and take what wages the Wicked One will give him. He had promised himself freedom in the world, but he becomes its slave; and it is a cruel bondage. All indeed who act the prodigal's part may not go to such lengths; but this parable is intended to shew to what a degraded state the backslider may sink, and from what depths the grace of God can deliver him. It is intended to shew the long-suffering of God, and that His love in Christ Jesus welcomes back the chief of sinners when he "comes to himself," and seeks God in true penitence of heart. To this state of mind the prodigal is brought at last, and he exclaims, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one

of thy hired servants" (vv. 18, 19). Thus he acknowledges his sin, and that he is indeed unworthy to be treated as a son.

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (ver. 20). Wonderfully does this verse set forth the depths of God's love—the love of Him Who spared not His own Son for us—that God is, in Christ Jesus, ever more ready to forgive than we are to ask forgiveness—that He goes to meet the returning prodigal. Nor must we fail to note that the father's kiss does not hinder the son's confession, and make him think it unnecessary. "And thus the truest and best repentance follows, and does not precede, the sense of forgiveness; and thus too repentance will be a life-long thing, for every new insight into that forgiving love will be as a new reason why the sinner should mourn to have sinned against it;"¹ the more real and thorough repentance is, the more humble and careful will be the future life.

The robe, the ring and the shoes are all tokens, that the prodigal is received back, not as a servant, according to his request, but as a *son*.

The parable, however, does not end with the restoration of the prodigal. In the concluding scene the father's love is contrasted with the envious and grudging spirit of his "elder son," who, while his brother was running his reckless course, continued with his father, carefully performing his accustomed service. Returning from his labours in the field, he inquires of a servant the reason of those sounds of rejoicing in his father's house that appear immediately to arouse his

¹ Trench.

suspicious. "Thy brother," answers the servant, "is come; and thy father hath killed for him the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound." The news gives him no pleasure, nor will he take part in the rejoicing; for "he was angry and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him." But he reproached his father with his kindness to the prodigal—with his want of it to himself—"Thou never gavest *me* a kid," but "thou hast killed for *him* the fatted calf." The father's reply is one of mild reproof: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found" (xv. 25-32).

It has been much questioned what kind of person—whether the really righteous or only the self-righteous and hypocritical—is represented by this "elder son." If the former, how do we account for his undutiful and unbrotherly conduct as portrayed in the parable? If, however, we suppose him to stand for the Pharisees, whose righteousness was for the most part feigned and hypocritical, and consequently altogether displeasing to God, we are at a loss to understand his faithfulness to his father, and also his father's kind words, loving expostulation and assurances of favour and acceptance.

Archbishop Trench, our chief authority on the parables, takes "a middle course," and supposes "that we see in this elder brother a low, but not altogether false form of legal righteousness. He is one whom the law has kept from gross offences; he has been occupied, though in a servile spirit, in the works of that law. So, no doubt, had it been with not a few of the

Pharisees. Some were hypocrites; but some sincerely, though in much blindness of heart, were followers after righteousness (Rom. x. 1, 3)."

We must be careful not to misunderstand, as many do, the concluding words, "Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." They are often understood to imply high praise; whereas really they convey a gentle reproof:—"Thou art ever with me,—let that suffice thee. All that I have is thine—thine while thou art willing to acknowledge thy dependence on me." In the words of the elder brother the father seems to discern the wish to be *independent*, the very sin of the prodigal, and His reply reproves it. (See Note 2.)

NOTES—LESSON IX.

1. "*The ninety and nine in the wilderness*" (xv. 4). We are not to understand by this a desert of sand or rock in which sheep could find no pasture, but wide grassy plains, desert only in the sense of being uninhabited. Even the deserts of Palestine and Arabia are not absolutely barren, for here and there are oases—"regions of wild fertility"—islands of grass, luxuriant patches of vegetation, in the midst of an ocean of burning sand.

2. Commenting upon the secondary meaning of the parable, or its application to the Gentile world, Archbishop Trench remarks:—"Regard it in that sense, and then this wasting of goods will be exactly described at Rom. i. 19-23; what remains in that chapter corresponding to the prodigal's joining himself to a citizen of the far country, and seeking to fill his belly with the swine's husks."

LESSON X.

PARABLES OF THE UNJUST STEWARD, THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS—THE CLEANSING OF THE TEN LEPERS—PARABLE OF THE UNJUST JUDGE—PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN. (xvi—xviii.)

WE are not told the effect upon the Scribes and Pharisees of that most beautiful of parables, with which our last Lesson concluded, but we may suppose, that resuming His discourse after a short interval, our Lord delivered the parable of *the unjust steward*, which also is found only in St. Luke's Gospel; and its meaning being obviously less apparent than that of most others, all the greater care is required in seeking out its true signification.

In this parable (see xvi. 1-9) the "certain rich man" represents God *in so far* as he was the owner of the property over which the steward had control, and God is the owner of all things. The steward stands for any one to whom God has given wealth and other means of doing good. The rich man of this world, whom the steward may be taken to represent, is brought before us, not as the lord of the estate, but as a person who manages it in the interest of a Master, the real owner of the property, to whom he, the steward, is answerable for all his transactions. This part of the parable is of itself most instructive, for we see the

principle here plainly laid down, that God is absolute owner of all the wealth of this world, and that those to whom it is given hold it *in trust for God*; that consequently they have no right to lavish it as they please upon their own pleasures and appetites—that they will have to render an account of it to God; yet how seldom do we see this principle carried out or even admitted as a fact!

The parable goes on to relate the worldly wisdom of the steward, who, when his lord was about to take from him the stewardship, on account of his carelessness or dishonesty, made friends with his lord's debtors by fraudulently excusing a part of their several debts; and we are told that the lord (not our Lord, but the lord or master of the unjust steward) commended his servant "because he had done wisely" (or prudently); "for" (here our Lord's comment and explanation of the parable begins) "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light,"—wiser in worldly matters than God's people are in the things of heaven—they are more zealous about them, strive more ardently after them, take more thought for them, than do God's people for the true riches; and so the latter may take a lesson from them, applying the diligence, forethought, and industry, wherewith the worldly man strives after the wealth of this world, to winning the heavenly inheritance.

"And," to continue our Lord's words, "I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations" (see vv. 9-12). It is as if our Lord had said:—Out of the mammon of unrighteousness (that is, by a right use of your worldly goods) make

the poor and needy your friends, that, when ye die, they may welcome you into the "everlasting habitations of heaven. If you have not used aright the wealth of this world which God committed to you, how can you suppose He will give you the true riches?"

Our Lord's plain speaking, we are told, offended those of the Pharisees who were covetous, "and they derided Him." Then He rebuked them, saying, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (xvi. 14, 15); and further warned them by the striking parable of *the rich man and Lazarus*.

As, however, covetousness, and probably penuriousness, rather than self-indulgence and excess, were the besetting sins of the Pharisees (many of whom were austere and even ascetic in their mode of life), such a parable has been thought more applicable to the Sadducees, whose self-indulgence and hard-heartedness towards others were undoubted. But the sins of both these sects may be traced to the same evil root of *unbelief*. This likewise was the root-sin of the rich man in the parable, of which his life of luxury, self-indulgence and denial of God, was the fruit; and, for the same reason—because his brethren believed not Moses nor the Prophets—he pleaded that Lazarus might be sent to them from the dead (xvi. 27).

"There was," so runs the parable, "a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day" (xvi. 19).

Usually the lot of men is more equal than it appears. Happiness is less easily attained and more readily lost than many suppose; and those who seek it by making

"pleasure" the business of their lives soon find out that they are but chasing an *ignis fatuus*—a sparkling thing that flies from them just as it seems within their grasp—and are the most miserable of mortals. They weary themselves in vain, and sigh for the invention of a new pleasure and that charm of novelty to which they have long been strangers. God has mercifully ordered all this as the penalty of seeking happiness *apart from Him*, and as the means of bringing back the prodigals to their Father's House. "Why," He says, "do ye spend your labour in vain, and your money for that which profiteth not? Come unto *Me* all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

This being so, nothing perhaps shews so much that God has forsaken a worldly man, as when (after giving no heed to warnings) he runs a course of unbroken prosperity without any apparent admixture of evil, and is thoroughly satisfied with it. God says of such an one—"He is joined to his idols, let him alone." David noted such men when he said, "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish;" but when he went into the sanctuary of God then he understood their end—how God set them in slippery places, "*and casteth them down into destruction*" (Psa. lxxiii.).

We may suppose that the rich man in the parable was one of these prosperous ungodly men of whom David spake, and that Lazarus, though poor indeed in this world, was rich in faith and an heir of the Kingdom. Indeed his name (mentioned surely for this reason) indicates his character,—Lazarus, or Eleazar, meaning "God is my helper."

How terrible the reverse for the rich man (ver. 23). But yesterday clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously, and little heeding or caring for the beggar at his gate; now praying that the beggar may minister to him the relief that he never extended to the sick and suffering—yesterday despising Moses and the prophets, and saying in his heart, "There is no God;" now praying that Lazarus may be sent from the dead to testify to his brethren. "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

"Thy good things"—the only things he sought or cared for—the portion he chose. We must not suppose that riches and prosperity necessarily exclude a man from heaven; or that wretchedness here will ensure happiness hereafter.

After certain sayings concerning offences, forgiveness and faith (xvii. 1-6), Jesus delivered the short parable of the *unprofitable servants* (see xvii. 7-10). Our Lord's application of it is contained in the last verse, and the lesson it teaches us is this:—However much we may devote ourselves to God's service, we cannot claim recompense or reward from Him. We have only done what it was our duty to do; and then our service how defective! our obedience how imperfect! "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20). How truly, after all, may we pray, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified."

As Jesus was going through the border country between Samaria and Galilee, in the direction of Peræa, He came to a certain village of which we know neither

the name nor the situation. Here there met Him ten men who were lepers (xvii. 11-19). These miserable outcasts had no doubt gathered together as soon as they heard that Jesus would pass that way, not without hope that He Who had worked such mighty miracles of healing would hear their prayer for help. They stood afar off, for the law commanded lepers to dwell apart (Lev. xiii. 46).

These lepers, St. Luke tells us, "lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests."

Now the priests did not and could not heal leprosy; but when leprosy shewed itself in any one, the priest pronounced him unclean; and if it disappeared the priest again restored the same person to the fellowship of the congregation (Lev. xiv. 3, 4). Why then did our Lord command these still uncleansed lepers to shew themselves to the priests? Doubtless to try their faith, which seems not to have faltered; for "it came to pass, that *as they went* they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that *he was healed*, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God; . . . and he was a Samaritan" (vv. 15, 16). In the case of this Samaritan, the healing of his body was followed we may believe by the cleansing of his soul from the far worse leprosy of sin; and the ingratitude of the nine unthankful lepers reminds us how much more ready we are to call upon God in the time of trouble than to glorify Him when He has wrought a deliverance for us.

As the Pharisees were our Lord's most bitter enemies, we can scarcely suppose their question—when the visible Kingdom of the Messiah should be

set up—to have been asked seriously and reverentially (xvii. 20). Our Lord answered it, however, not by speaking of times and seasons, but by describing His second advent in glory (ver. 24), as in the parallel passage in St. Matthew (xxiv.); “but first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of that generation” (ver. 25).

The parable of *the unjust judge* (xviii. 1-8) appears to have been spoken in connexion with the preceding discourse as an encouragement to the Church in times of trial. Like the parable of *the friend at midnight* (xi. 5-8), it teaches the power of persevering prayer, and that if *an unjust judge* yields at last to the perseverance of the widow, how much more will “God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them” (ver. 7).

The parable of *the Pharisee and the Publican* (xviii. 9-14) was addressed, not to the Pharisees, but “unto certain” of our Lord’s own disciples who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.” Two men are praying in the Temple, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican, and the prayer of each is recorded for our instruction.

The prayer of the Pharisee is simply a vain-glorious boast—a mixture of pride, scorn and hypocrisy. The prayer of the Publican is the language of the true penitent—of the broken and contrite heart confessing before God its own utter unworthiness; and accordingly the Publican, as our Saviour tells us, went down to his house justified rather than the other.

The story of little children brought to Jesus (xviii. 15-17), the rich young man, and our Lord’s discourse upon riches (vv. 18-30), are related by both St. Mat-

thew (xix. 13-30) and St. Mark (x. 13-31), and have been considered in Manual I. p. 56, and Manual II. pp. 44, 45.

NOTES—LESSON X.

Explanation of words and passages:—

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD.

(a) "*An hundred measures of oil*"—the "measure" was the "bath" (Isa. v. 10; Ezek. xiv. 10-14), and was equal to seven or eight gallons. *The hundred measures of wheat* (the homer, cor, or coros) contained about thirty-two pecks. The several debtors appear to have given each a note of hand for what they had received upon credit. The steward says,—

(b) "*Take thy bill;*" that is, take it back, and alter the amount as I shall direct.

(c) "*Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.*" This should be "out of" the mammon of unrighteousness, the latter phrase signifying money or wealth. Our Lord calls it the "mammon of unrighteousness" because of the unrighteousness of which it is the occasion.

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

(a) "*Purple and fine linen.*" The purple dye and fine linen of antiquity were very costly.

(b) "*In hell,*" that is, in Hades, or the place of departed spirits, in which the saved and the lost are separated by that "great gulf" of which Abraham speaks.

(c) "*The Pharisee stood and prayed.*" This of itself was not a sign of pride, standing being the customary position of a Jew when engaged in prayer.

LESSON XI.

JESUS AND ZACCHÆUS—PARABLE OF THE POUNDS—JESUS
WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM—HIS QUESTION CONCERN-
ING HIMSELF—THE WIDOW'S MITE—JUDAS AND THE
CHIEF PRIESTS—THE NIGHT OF BETRAYAL—JUDAS AND
HIS BAND—THE ARREST—OUR LORD'S LAST MIRACLE—
PETER'S REPENTANCE—SECOND MEETING OF THE SAN-
HEDRIM. (xviii. 31—xxii. 71.)

IN our last Lesson we came to the end of that supple-
mentary and episodic section of St. Luke's Gos-
pel (ix. 51—xviii. 15) the nature of which was explained
in Lesson VII. of the present Manual. The narratives
of the first three Evangelists become again parallel at
the three several points—Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 13;
Luke xviii. 15.

Resuming the connected and orderly narrative at
chapter xviii. 31, St. Luke informs us that Jesus "took
unto Him the Twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we
go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by
the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be
accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the
Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated
and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put
Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again."

* though, as on a former occasion, our Lord's words

were so plain and unmistakeable (as one would have supposed), St. Luke tells us that the Twelve "understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken" (ver. 34). Their firm faith in the many promises that assured them of the greatness and glory of the Messiah (to which we shall presently recur) blinded their eyes to the equally explicit prophecies which spoke of Him as a Sufferer and a Sin-bearer. They could not reconcile the two, and to their Lord's plain prediction of coming persecutions and a cruel death they gave probably some figurative or symbolical meaning. Their present public journey to Jerusalem, the Mission of the Seventy, and the way in which Jesus was received by the people, had all tended, we may suppose, to revive their expectations of the immediate manifestation of Christ's Kingdom and power.

Jesus now started, it is probable, from Ephraim,¹ whither (as St. John tells us) He had sought refuge and concealment from His enemies in Jerusalem. His visit to Jericho and the cure of the blind man (vv. 35-43) have been already noticed (see Manual II. pp. 47, 48).

Our Lord entered Jericho surrounded by a crowd of people, made up, it would appear, of Galilæan disciples, Passover pilgrims, and inhabitants of Jericho. That city was, as we have seen, an important place in the time of our Lord, situated in one of the most fruitful districts of Palestine. Here numerous priests led a life of quiet contemplation beneath the shadow of the kingly palm and amid the fragrance of the balsam-tree

¹ The site of Ephraim is not positively known. Robinson and Stanley suppose it to be represented by the modern *et-Taïyibeh*, five or six miles east of Bethel, and about sixteen miles north-east of Jerusalem.

and the rose. But Jericho was also a city in which there were many tax-gatherers, or collectors of customs or dues (publicans); for its trade was considerable, and it lay on a great commercial highway—the road from Peræa to Jerusalem, and near to one of the fords of the Jordan. It has been already explained why the publicans were regarded by the Jews with so much hatred and scorn (see Note 7, p. 26, Manual I.) as renegades and traitors—men who for the sake of gain betrayed the cause of their country, and collected tribute from God's chosen people for a profane and Gentile ruler and oppressor.

Zacchæus of Jericho was one of these lost sheep, the story of whose recovery and bringing again into the fold St. Luke has a special pleasure in relating. "He was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich." He desired greatly to see Jesus; not, we may believe, out of mere idle curiosity, but from a higher and nobler motive. Zacchæus was, however, so short of stature, that our Lord was completely hidden from him by the thronging people. This being so, he resorted to what must have been an unusual expedient for such a person. Running forward to a place which he knew Jesus must pass, he climbed up into a sycamore tree.* "And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house" (xix. 1-5).

In the speech that Zacchæus made on this occasion (ver. 8), he was not boasting of what *had* already been his practice, or it would have resembled rather too closely the prayer of the Pharisee. It was, on the con-

* Not the sycamore of this country, but a tree belonging to the genus *Ficus*.

trary, a vow of what he *would* do. He wished to shew the reality of his repentance by bringing forth the fruit thereof. And our Lord's answer was one of peace, for He said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (xix. 2-10).

Jesus was still, we may suppose, in the house of Zacchæus when He spoke the parable of *the pounds*, and St. Luke tells us it was "because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought the Kingdom of God should immediately appear" (xix. 11); that is, the visible Kingdom of the Messiah, for which both the disciples and people longed eagerly and were impatient. The object of the parable was to teach them the need of a patient waiting for the coming of the great King, and diligence in working for Him until His return.

"He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." Christ Himself was that "nobleman." He was about to journey into a "far country" "and to return," and this our Lord wished to set forth by a simile that all would understand. The under-kings and rulers of the great Roman Empire all received their authority from the Emperor of Rome, and were in the habit of going to Rome to receive each one for himself his kingdom or principality. This fitly represented to the Jewish people what their Messiah was about to do. Having fulfilled the mystery of His humiliation, suffering and atonement (to which here indeed no allusion is made), He would go to the Father, "to be enthroned in His heavenly state, and in Heaven to rule over all as the

Son of Man (Heb. ii. 7, 8; Phil. ii. 9-11).” But this was not all; for, as Archbishop Trench further remarks, “it may with equal truth be affirmed that He went to receive solemn investiture of that earthly kingdom which He had purchased with His blood, and which hereafter He shall return and claim as His own, sitting on the throne of His father David; and the parable itself suggests this last as the kingdom intended here.”

We have seen how deeply rooted in the minds, not only of the Twelve, but of the whole Jewish people, was their belief in a visible and glorious reign and Kingdom of the Messiah, when He should restore the Kingdom to Israel—a reign and a kingdom of which Solomon’s was but a feeble, though clear and positive, type; nor must we suppose that these notions were altogether carnal, worldly and mistaken. Their warrant for such expectations was to be found in almost every page of their scriptures; and their error was, not in believing in the literal fulfilment of these promises, but in overlooking or misinterpreting the prophecies that, side by side with the others, testified to the no less literal humiliation, suffering and persecution of the Promised One.

To take one or two of the prophecies that speak of the promised Messiah as a great King. “Unto us a Child is born. . . . Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, *upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom*, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever” (Isa. ix. 6, 7). “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, *and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth*. In

His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6). These, and other similar old Testament prophecies, are in every way confirmed in the New Testament. See Acts ii. 30, where St. Peter insists on the necessity of our Lord's Resurrection in order that He may sit upon the throne of His father David; and the words of the angel to the Virgin Mary, as recorded by St. Luke, are equally explicit: "The Lord God shall give unto Him *the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever;* and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33).

The nobleman in the parable, before taking his departure, "called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come" (xix. 13). So in Christ's absence there is to be diligent working as well as patient waiting; and when He returns He will reward every one as his work shall be; giving one authority over ten cities, and another over five cities, and punishing the slothful servant who has made no use of his gifts, time and opportunities. But this is not all, for in the parable the king commands his enemies to be slain in his presence, and in these words we have set forth the wrath of the Lord Jesus Himself against all whom He shall find at His coming in open rebellion against Him. This vengeance was executed in part against the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem; but it will only have its full accomplishment when our Lord returns in glory to take to Himself "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," and to put down all enemies under His feet.

St. Luke's account of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (xix. 28-44) is similar to those of both St. Matthew and St. Mark (see Manual I. pp. 60, 61, and Manual II. pp. 60, 61). The words "peace in Heaven" (ver. 38) are however recorded by St. Luke alone; and the "Hosanna" of St. Matthew is here rendered "Glory," a word more likely to be understood by Gentile readers. St. Luke, too, alone mentions that the Pharisees were offended at the honours paid to Jesus, and said to Him, "Master, rebuke Thy disciples. And He answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (vv. 39, 40).

To St. Luke also we owe the knowledge of our Lord's pathetic lament over Jerusalem:—"And when He was come near He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall *cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another*: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (vv. 41-44). How human was this weeping; how more than human that prophetic gaze into futurity! The prophecy passed into history about forty years from the time it was spoken, when it was fulfilled to the very letter, as we have seen in Manual II. pp. 71, 72.

Our Lord had now appealed for the last time to the Jewish people. He had made His public entry into Jerusalem as Messiah, and the shouts of the multitude

hailed Him as "the King that cometh in the name of the Lord" (xix. 38); "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Manual II., St. Mark, p. 60): but though His disciples and Galilæan followers thus paid homage to Him as the Messiah and King of Israel, their enthusiasm was not shared by the inhabitants of the Holy City.

The several events and discourses of which mention is made in the twentieth chapter of St. Luke, including the cleansing of the Temple—our Lord's daily teaching in the Temple during the Holy Week—the parable of the wicked husbandmen—the questions of the Scribes and Pharisees—are also found in the parallel chapters of St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Gospels (Matt. xxi. and xxii. ; Mark xi. and xii.), and have been glanced at in Manuals I. (pp. 62, 63) and II. (pp. 62-66).

Our Lord's question concerning Himself (xx. 41-44) was intended to lead the Pharisees to a higher view of the Messiah, Who was indeed, according to their scriptures, to be a Divine Being, and therefore much more than simply a Son of David. This He shewed them by quoting David's own words in Psalm cx. 1; but their unbelief and hardness of heart were proof against this and all our Saviour's efforts to reveal the truth to them.

The Monday and Tuesday in Holy Week—the eleventh and twelfth Nisan—were the last days of our Lord's public ministry. On both days He taught in the Temple, arguing with the spiritual teachers and rulers of the people, and trying to make some impression upon them; but "the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy Him;" and the more because of His sharp rebukes and sting-

ing parables. Their fear of the people alone kept them from dragging our Lord at once before the Sanhedrim and executing their vengeance upon Him (xix. 47, 48).

Before leaving the Temple, never more to enter it, our Lord lingered with His disciples in the courts of His Father's House. They were in the court of the women; and here, Jesus looking up, "saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury" (see Note 1). He did not, however, hold them up to His disciples as examples of self-denying charity or zealous supporters of God's service; but of "a certain poor widow," who cast in two mites, He said:—"Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." And so her faith and love made it a very precious offering in the eyes of her Lord—an offering beside which the gifts of the rich men were poor indeed!

Our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem—"the days of vengeance"—and of His "coming in a cloud with power and great glory," have been briefly considered in former Manuals (see *ante*).

This same Tuesday evening, it would seem—probably as our Lord and His disciples were on their way to Bethany—His enemies in Jerusalem held a council on the best means of getting Him into their power. They thought it dangerous to attempt His arrest during the feast, while He was surrounded by His Galilæan followers; but Jesus had prophesied that at this very feast He would be betrayed and crucified; and accordingly we find that a most unexpected event caused the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees to alter

their determination. Even while they were deliberating an offer of betrayal came from one of the twelve disciples, and the opportunity was not to be neglected. St. Luke tells us but the awful truth when he says that "Satan entered into Judas," who "went his way and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray Him unto them *in the absence of the multitude*" (xxii. 3-6).

The Wednesday of Holy Week Jesus is supposed to have passed in retirement at Bethany. The next day He sent two of His disciples into the city (St. Luke informs us that these were Peter and John) to prepare the Passover, and on Thursday evening (or the beginning of Friday according to Jewish reckoning¹) our Lord sat down with His disciples to the Paschal meal. St. Luke's account of it, and of the institution of the Holy Supper (xxii. 14-20), agrees in the main with that of the first two Evangelists; but a few important differences or additions are to be noted; and if we turn to St. Paul's authoritative statement of the institution of the Eucharist (see 1 Cor. xi. 23-26), which he received by special revelation from the Lord (ver. 23), and compare it with St. Luke's, the remarkable verbal agreement between them is so obvious, that we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that St. Luke was indebted to St. Paul (whose faithful friend and companion he was) for several of the particulars he has recorded.

We also learn from this Evangelist that the old strife amongst the disciples as to which of them should be the greatest was renewed during this last private

¹ The Jews reckoning their day from sunset to sunset.

meeting of Jesus and His disciples. In reproving them, our Lord alludes to His having just washed their feet (ver. 27);—a most interesting coincidence between St. John's Gospel and St. Luke's.

After the Agony of the Garden (when, as St. Luke alone tells us, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"¹) followed the arrest.

While Jesus and His disciples were yet in the upper room, and the Eleven listened in silence, dejection and foreboding to their Lord's last sad words of love and counsel, Judas, having separated himself from their company, was hastening to the chief priests and elders to carry out with them his scheme of treachery. They quickly made the necessary preparations. The guard of the Temple gathered under their captains. A detachment of Roman soldiers from Fort Antonia, eager to take part in the arrest of a dangerous popular favourite, were soon ready to follow and assist the Jewish leaders of such an enterprise. Grave members of the Sanhedrim and their servants, and lawless fanatics armed with swords and staves, swelled the motley band; and though they had the bright shining of the clear full moon to light them on their way, yet they carried torches and lanterns, lest Jesus or His followers should hide in the shade of the olive-trees or in the darker caves or empty tombs that studded the western side of Olivet. Judas led the way, walking in advance; for he was to hail his Master with friendly greeting, and point Him out to the others by the traitor's kiss.

¹ St. Luke, as a physician, would doubtless make special note of such a fact.

The arrest was quickly made, for Jesus voluntarily surrendered Himself into the hands of the soldiers; and even in that trying moment, with meek words—"Suffer ye thus far"—He freed His hand that the soldiers had seized to fetter, and with a more than human patience and forbearance, raised it to heal the ear of the high-priest's servant which Peter had cut off (xxii. 47-51).

St. Luke, in his account of Peter's denial of Jesus at the high-priest's palace, has recorded the affecting incident that, at St. Peter's third denial, his Lord "turned and looked upon him" (see Note 2). That look went straight to the heart of the conscience-stricken Apostle, who, remembering the Lord's warning and his own boastful words, went out and wept bitterly (vv. 54-62).

At our Lord's trial, the Sanhedrim violated every principle of justice and paid no attention to their own traditions. The judicial proceedings were a mere form, for the condemnation of their prisoner had already been determined upon. He had no advocate, nor were witnesses called to testify in His favour.

The trial recorded by St. Luke (xxii. 66-71) appears to be that *second* assembly of the Sanhedrim *at their own hall in the morning*, to ratify and make good the trial which had been held *during the night in the palace of Caiaphas*, and was therefore irregular and illegal. At this second meeting of the council¹ we hear accordingly of no witnesses, and it was only necessary to take down our Lord's confession. So they asked Him again the questions, "Art Thou the Christ?" and "Art Thou the Son of God?" and He answered them,

¹ This second meeting of the Sanhedrim is related still more briefly by St. Matthew (xxviii. 1) and St. Mark (xv. 1).

"Ye say that I am ;" which means "Ye speak the truth in saying that I am the Son of God." Then they condemned Him to death for blasphemy.

NOTES—LESSON XI.

1. "*Casting their gifts into the treasury.*" This was in the court of the women (so called because women might not go beyond it except for the purpose of sacrificing), for here were placed against the wall thirteen trumpet-shaped chests in which the legal contributions to the Temple service were deposited, and also voluntary gifts ; four out of the thirteen being appropriated to these latter donations.

2. "*Turned and looked upon him.*" To understand how it was that our Lord when undergoing examination before the council could turn and look upon Peter, who was in the "hall" with the servants, it is necessary to remember that the "hall" here mentioned was probably one of those square open courts around which the various chambers of an oriental house are built. The council sat doubtless in a room open to the hall, of which it would command a view.

LESSON XII.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE—BEFORE HEROD—THE WEEPING
DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM—THE CRUCIFIXION—THE
BURIAL—THE RESURRECTION—THE FORTY DAYS—THE
ASCENSION. (xxiii. xxiv.)

IN our own country, when an accused person has been tried by a lawful tribunal and found guilty of a crime for which the penalty is death, the judge, in accordance with the verdict of the jury, passes sentence upon him; but before that sentence can be carried out it must receive the sanction of the executive, and that of the highest person in the realm; yet, except in special cases of appeal, this sanction is never refused: the justice of the verdict and the impartiality of the judge being taken for granted.

It was just such a sanction as this that the judges of the Sanhedrim desired should be given to their sentence against the Lord by Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judæa. They did not wish him to call their judgment in question, but simply to ratify it.

Pilate was not a scrupulous man. In a matter of policy or expediency—to prevent or to quell a tumult, to sweep out of his way any opposing obstacle—he was not wont to waste time by asking many questions. In such cases he could shed human blood without cor-

punction, and people shuddered as they told how he had caused it to flow in the Temple itself, and mingled the blood of his victims with that of the sacrifices. Pilate, then, was severe, tyrannical and passionate—the whip of the Jewish kings became in his hands a scourge of scorpions—but he was not wantonly cruel, and his treatment of our Lord shewed that he had some sense of justice and some desire to protect the innocent—if that could be done without risk of injury to himself.

No sooner was Jesus brought into his presence than the chief priests “began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King” (xxiii. 2).

Pilate was a man of the world and used to men of every kind and degree. His quick eye speedily detected the kind of person he had to deal with, and there was something in the look and bearing of Jesus as He stood before Him—patient, unresisting, calm and majestic—that interested and even awed him; wholly uninfluenced as he usually was by either pity or sentiment.

There, too, were His judges—excited, clamorous, dictatorial; and though they accused their prisoner of treasonable proceedings, Pilate felt sure it was not devotion to the Roman Emperor, nor zeal for the payment of his tribute, that had caused them to condemn this Man to death.

Pilate then questioned Jesus that he might judge of Him himself, and the result was that he found no fault in Him (ver. 4). He wished therefore to have nothing to do with His condemnation, but the men who had brought Him thither “were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry,

beginning from Galilee to this place." Pilate was still unwilling to give Jesus over to His enemies, but he feared also to exasperate them, for they were influential men, and might damage his interests with his imperial master by their representations. In this perplexity he thought of an expedient that would answer the double purpose of relieving Him (as he hoped) from all responsibility in this matter, and would at the same time conciliate the King of Galilee, whom he had offended, and whose enmity might be prejudicial to him. Jesus, they said, was a Galilæan. He would, then, send Him to Herod, whose subject He was, and who understood how to manage these troublesome Jewish priests better than he did. Let Herod be His judge, and condemn Him or acquit Him as he thought best.

St. Luke tells us that "when Herod" (who had come to Jerusalem for the feast) "saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words; *but he answered him nothing.* And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him" (vv. 8-10).

It strikes us at once that our Lord's conduct was the exact opposite of what might have been expected from a man in His position. A mere man, anxious to avoid the unjust death that awaited Him at the hands of the judges of the Sanhedrim, would have hailed such an opportunity of vindicating himself. He would have done his utmost to awaken Herod's sense of justice and secure his protection. He was Herod's subject (He might have urged), and yet these men had dared to seize Him and condemn Him. Would Herod allow

his prerogative and jurisdiction to be thus interfered with? Our Lord did nothing of the kind. No boon nor favour would He ask of Herod, and far from pleading His cause, He offended the king by refusing even to speak to him. He would not gratify him by an exercise of His miraculous power. He would not raise a finger to conciliate the murderer of John the Baptist.

And so "Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate" (ver. 11).

Thus Pilate's expedient for getting rid of the case failed entirely, and it was thrown back upon his hands. In this dilemma he tried another means of escape. Calling "together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people, he said unto them, I find no fault in this Man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him: no, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him. I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him (for of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast)." And so Pilate thought to satisfy all parties—"the people by releasing Him; the priests and elders, by chastising Him; and himself, by delivering Him from death;"¹ but instead of satisfying all he pleased none. Nothing would content the priests and rulers but the carrying out of their sentence; and the people (easily excited against an individual by any charge of blasphemy, and ever ready to punish the victim of it with all the cruelty of fanaticism) were moved by the priests to answer clamorously, "Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas" (son, that is, of Abbas). Pilate, however, "willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

¹ Andrews.

But they cried, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him." Still, knowing that Jesus had been a favourite of the people, and not understanding their sudden change of feeling towards Him, he reasoned with them again the third time, saying, "Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him; I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required" (xxiii. 13-25). Then, on that high feast day—the first day of unleavened bread—the saddest, mournfulest spectacle ever beheld in any city was seen in the streets of Jerusalem.

Let us look at this sad sight. A detachment of Roman soldiers are slowly making their way towards one of the gates on the eastern side of the city, and with them are three men, each one carrying a huge wooden cross (or perhaps the transverse beam of a cross), to which he is to be nailed by his hands and feet, and so to linger until life shall die out under accumulated sufferings. Two of these are criminals; but the third is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth, the friend and benefactor of the people, Who has spent the best years of His life in soothing their sorrows, healing their sicknesses, and speaking peace to their consciences.

"Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth?" Nay, rather the Prince of Life and Glory, the Redeemer of the world; but now stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; for the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He too carries His cross, until, weakened by agony of mind and body, He sinks under it—for surely it was not compassion that made the soldiers lay it upon Simon

the Cyrenian, "that he might bear it after Jesus" (xxiii. 26).

Jesus was well known to the people of Jerusalem, for they had seen His miracles, listened to His Divine words, and even the little children in the Temple had sung His praises; and many who loved our Lord looked on, we may suppose, in shuddering silence when they saw Him thus led forth to execution. The streets of Jerusalem were astir with the tread of many feet; for Passover-pilgrims, strangers and proselytes would be hurrying to and fro, and gazing with wondering eyes upon the buildings and palaces, the sights and sounds of the royal city. So, as the procession moved forward, and the news was passed from mouth to mouth, numbers would be drawn together to look their last at the fallen Prophet, and to tell how He had healed one, and spoken kind words to another, or raised from the dead the child of a third, until, as St. Luke tells us, "there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us" (vv. 27-30).

"And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary" (see Note 1), "there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (vv. 33, 34).

All through our Lord's life on earth His consideration and sympathy for others and His labours for them were only equalled by His entire forgetfulness of Himself—of His own ease and even of His own necessities. His life, during the time of His ministry, was one continual sacrifice; and when the last terrible week came, and the shadow of the cross darkened into the intensest gloom, still His sadness and His sorrow were not for His own exceeding sufferings, but for the judgments they would call down upon the guilty authors of them.

Most of these incidents—Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, the healing of Malchus' ear, the lament of the daughters of Jerusalem, our Lord's prayer for the men who had nailed Him to the cross—are narrated only by St. Luke. He delighted (as we have seen) to set Jesus forth as the Friend and Redeemer of all men, and to illustrate by parables, and by our Lord's words and deeds, His far-reaching, all-embracing mercy and compassion, and accordingly it is he who gives us the story of the penitent thief (vv. 40-43), in which we behold our Lord saving to the *uttermost*; reaching down to the lowest depths of human degradation and misery, and speaking peace to the lost one in the gracious promise, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit"² (His human spirit), He gave up the ghost.

By the miraculous darkness that (from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, or from twelve o'clock till three) veiled the last hours of the Son of God upon the cross, and the earthquake that rent the rocks and opened

² A quotation from Psa. xxxi. 5.

the sepulchres they contained (see Note I (*k*), p. 95, Manual II.), God spoke to the hearts of many, calling them to repentance. The centurion, when he witnessed these visible signs of the Divine anger, "glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man," and the conscience-stricken people "smote their breasts," as they hastened back in terror to their homes in Jerusalem (vv. 44-48).

But though our Lord had suffered with the malefactors, His sacred Body was not to be thrown into their unhallowed grave. Joseph's new tomb received it, and there it was placed with reverent hands, tenderly, and with such brief preparations and anointing as time and circumstances allowed. The women who had followed Him from Galilee looked on, and marking where the body was laid, returned to the city and prepared spices and ointments; intending, when the sabbath rest should be over, to hasten back and complete that embalmment, which now was the only way in which they could shew their love and reverence to their crucified Lord (vv. 50-56).

Accordingly, "upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared." But that cold, pierced, blood-stained Body, which they saw wrapped in linen and placed in Joseph's tomb on Friday eve, no longer needs their pious care. The stone door of the sepulchre is rolled aside, and two men in shining garments speak to them, and say, "Why seek ye the living" (or the Living One) "among the dead? He is not here, but *is risen*: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee; saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands

of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." And they remembered His words. Then these women (Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women) "told these things unto the Apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." But Peter ran in haste to the sepulchre, and saw the empty tomb and the linen clothes that had swathed the Lord's Body.

St. Luke's account of the events of Easter Day is nearly three times longer than either St. Matthew's or St. Mark's; and to St. Luke we owe the story of the walk of the two disciples to Emmaus—the story that interests the child no less than the theologian.

On that first Easter Monday, two disciples—Cleopas and another (see Note 2)—were talking together in sorrowful tones of their Lord's Crucifixion as they walked in deep dejection towards the village of Emmaus. And as they journeyed a Stranger drew near, inquiring, as if with friendly curiosity, about what they were talking so earnestly, and withal so sadly. His sympathy was not rejected, though Cleopas asked in surprise, how he alone of all the visitors to Jerusalem could be ignorant of what had happened? and if he knew it why should he ask the cause of their sorrow? thought the loving disciples. But the Stranger answered, What things? Then both the disciples (it would seem) spoke of "Jesus of Nazareth," a Prophet mighty in deed and word, and how that He (Whom they trusted would have redeemed Israel) had been crucified by the chief priests and rulers; but to the story of His Resurrection (as reported by certain women of their company) they attached little credit.

Again the Unknown One—but now with sudden authority and startling rebuke,—“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken”—became the questioner, and said, “Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer before He entered into His glory?”—necessary to the fulfilment of those prophecies which testified beforehand of His sufferings as well as of the glory that should follow. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

And so, the three arriving at the village, the disciples constrained their mysterious Companion to abide with them; for it was toward evening and the day was far spent. “And,” in the words of the sacred narrative, “as He sat at meat with them, He took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight” (xxiv. 13-31).

Then, their hearts still burning within them, they arose in eager haste, and returning to Jerusalem, told the Eleven, and others who were with them, how the Lord had opened to them the scriptures, “and how he was known of them in breaking of bread;” whilst the Eleven could also tell of an appearance—that to Simon—that “the Lord had risen indeed, and appeared to Simon.” And even while they yet spoke, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you; and to convince them that He was not a spirit as they supposed, He shewed them His hands and His feet, saying, “Behold, . . . handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have;” and, still adding proof to proof, He took food and did eat before them.

In verses 44-49 St. Luke gives us a brief summary of our Lord's teaching, commands and promises during the forty days.

St. Mark relates our Lord's Ascension in a single verse; but he follows Him in spirit to the right hand of God. St. Luke tells us *how* He was taken up. He led His Apostles out in the direction of Bethany, and while He blessed them with uplifted hands, He was parted from them, and—still ascending, still blessing—He was carried up into Heaven (vv. 50-51)—a beautiful picture to remain for ever in the minds of the Eleven.

NOTES—LESSON XII.

1. "*Calvary*" (Luke xxiii. 33). The Greek word *kranion* (a skull) is used by all the Evangelists as a translation of the Hebrew word *Golgotha* (see Note 2, p. 80, Manual I.), and in St. Luke's Gospel only this word is rendered Calvary, from the Latin word *Calvaria*, a skull, used in the Vulgate or ancient Latin version of the Scriptures. The prefix *Mount* Calvary perpetuates the popular error that the place of crucifixion was a mount or hill, for which we have no authority.

2. "*And beginning at Moses and all the prophets.*" He spake "unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 27). Thus our Lord bore testimony to the fact that the types and sacrifices of the Mosaic law referred to Himself and to His sufferings, for in no other way does Moses write of them.





